

Hizbollah urges resistance against Israel

BEIRUT (R) — The pro-Iranian Hizbollah (Party of God) urged Lebanon's unity cabinet Friday to support resistance against Israel and to consolidate armed Palestinian presence in the country. "On disbanding militias, there is a need to distinguish between their role and that of the resistance which requires clear commitment to support it and its continuation against the Zionist occupation," the group said in a statement. Hizbollah, was the only major armed group excluded from the newly formed cabinet grouping the country's militia chiefs. The 5,000-strong group has repeatedly refused the present political system. An internationally backed peace pact to end Lebanon's 15 years of sectarian strife stipulated disbanding of all private armies, which group some 50,000 militiamen. "In this context, it is essential to give South Lebanon and the western Bekaa (Valley in eastern Lebanon) priority in development projects and to support agricultural production to control rural emigration and to strengthen the popular resistance," added Hizbollah.

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published by the Jordan Press Foundation
جوردان تايمز يومية سياسية تصدر بالانجليزية عن المؤسسة الصحفية الأردنية «الراي»

Gulf war could spark Philippine uprising

MANILA (R) — Defence Secretary Fidel Ramos warned Friday the Philippines could face a combined right-wing army coup attempt and a communist-led uprising if war erupts in the Gulf. He said in a speech to business and labour leaders that communist hit squads had moved into Manila just before Christmas in anticipation of fresh army putsch against President Corason Aquino. Aquino, who has survived six coup attempts since being swept to power in a popular revolt almost five years ago, has asked Congress for emergency powers for six months to cope with the potential impact of a war in the Gulf. Ramos said that according to captured documents, communist guerrillas were planning a campaign of assassinations and robberies and were also training underground hit squads. He said that if army rebels launched another coup attempt, the communists planned to "join in the fray to make the conflict bloodier." They also planned to bomb and loot supermarkets.

Volume 16 Number 4589

AMMAN SATURDAY, JANUARY 5, 1991, JUMA'DAH AL THANI 19, 1411

Price: Jordan 100 fils; Saudi Arabia 1.50 riyals; UAE 1.50 dirhams

U.S., Saudis to drop proposed arms package

WASHINGTON (R) — The United States and Saudi Arabia have agreed to drop a proposed \$7 billion arms package for the kingdom until after the Gulf crisis, the State Department announced Friday. U.S. Secretary of State James Baker told Congress on Thursday the Bush Administration would not be proceeding with the sale. "We agreed that resolution of the Gulf crisis was our first priority and we need to further assess Saudi arms needs in the context of the post-crisis environment," said State Department spokesman Richard Boucher. "Strong defence forces are an important element of regional stability and the U.S. will continue to assist Saudi Arabia building such capabilities," he said.

Americans to stage peace marches

PARIS (R) — The Paris-based "Americans for Peace" group Friday called on Americans in Europe and the United States to march next Monday for a peaceful solution to the crisis in the Gulf. The group said in a statement it was calling for protest demonstrations on Jan. 7 in Paris, Washington, Geneva, London, Stockholm, Rome and Bonn to demand a peaceful settlement of the crisis "avoiding catastrophe for the U.S. and for mankind." In Geneva, the group set up last October will join 21 organisations including the World Council of Churches and the International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War.

Papandreou to go on trial in March

ATHENS (AP) — Former Premier Andreas Papandreou and three members of his 1981-89 socialist government will be tried for corruption on March 11, Supreme Court President Vasilios Kokkinos said Friday. Papandreou, who leads the Panhellenic Socialist Movement (Pasek), faces three criminal charges in connection with the \$210-million embezzlement of the privately-owned Bank of Crete in 1988. Former ministers Agamemnon Koutsogiorgas, Dimitris Tsoulas and George Petros will be tried with Papandreou on similar charges. Papandreou and Tsoulas are presently members of the 300-member parliament.

Lebanese troops clash with Syrian unit

BEIRUT (R) — Lebanese troops and a Syrian army intelligence unit fought with machineguns for 15 minutes on Friday in the section of Beirut where President Elias Hrawi has his headquarters, security sources and witnesses said. No casualties were reported in the first such exchange since thousands of Lebanese army soldiers, backed by Syrian troops, took control of a militia-free Beirut on Dec. 3. The sources said the firefight took place in the Ramlet Al Baydah district where Hrawi is based and Damascus maintains the headquarters of its 40,000 troops in Lebanon. It was not immediately known what triggered the battle, which was halted after high-level contacts.

USS Missouri helps Saudi tanker ablaze

BAHRAIN (AP) — A Saudi Arabian tanker caught fire Friday while sailing through the Gulf and an American battleship rushed to help, U.S. navy and shipping sources reported. The 23,618-ton Saudi-flagged Tahuk put out a distress call and reported fire in the engine room as it sailed off the emirate of Ajman at the southern edge of the Gulf, near the Strait of Hormuz, said radio shipping monitors. Joint information bureau spokesman (Sean B. Atkinson, of the U.S. navy, confirmed that the battleship USS Missouri "responded to the distress call from the ship and is providing assistance."

Aziz to meet Baker in Geneva Wednesday

King Hussein, Major welcome move towards American-Iraqi contacts

BAGHDAD (Agencies) — Iraq Friday accepted Washington's proposal for talks next week on the Gulf crisis, agreeing to meet just six days before a U.N. deadline for Baghdad to leave Kuwait or face possible attack. U.S. President George Bush's administration called the agreement "an encouraging sign."

Iraqi Foreign Minister Tariq Aziz said he will travel to Geneva on Wednesday to meet with U.S. Secretary of State James Baker. But Aziz also said he will insist upon linking any Iraqi pullout to the Palestinian situation — a stance Washington has repeatedly rejected.

Israel steps up its war against Palestinian revolt

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (Agencies) — Israel, alarmed by the growing power of the Palestinian uprising, has stepped up its war against Palestinians in the occupied Gaza Strip, sources said Friday.

Israeli forces have killed eight Palestinians in the Gaza Strip since Saturday, five of them activists, attempting to flee rather than attack the Israelis. Gaza residents say security forces — many working undercover — have been making extra efforts to track down suspected activists, penetrating deep into refugee camps in the hunt for Palestinians.

Witnesses to operations in Gaza and the West Bank say the Israelis shoot to kill. The army denies the charge but a high proportion of the dead are shot in the head and upper torso, Palestinian doctors say. Since Israeli police shot dead at least 20 Palestinians in Jerusalem last October, fanning the flames of revolt, Israel has stepped up its fight against

Palestinians their rights and self-determination and independence, and to have Jerusalem as the capital of the state of Palestine. Iraq has linked a pullout of Israeli forces from the Israeli-occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip with any Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait.

Bush said Thursday that his proposal for talks meant, "no negotiations, no compromises, no attempt at face-saving and no rewards" for aggression. He gave Baghdad until Saturday to respond.

Aziz said Friday, the American administration "as usual, had accompanied its new proposal to meet in Switzerland with a series of arrogant statements, a course which demonstrates its ill-intentions."

"Iraq has always affirmed, and does so now, its firm stand that it is not afraid of pressure and does not determine its position under threat," he added.

Aziz said Baghdad's call for a regional settlement had been conveyed to Washington along with its agreement to attend the Jan. 3 meeting.

His Majesty King Hussein and British Prime Minister John Major Thursday welcomed Bush's proposal for a meeting between top U.S. and Iraqi officials in Switzerland next week.

"We welcome very much indeed the initiative made by President Bush this morning. We very much hope Mr. Baker will go to Switzerland and that Aziz will go to Switzerland to meet him," Major said.

The prime minister spoke outside his 10 Downing Street residence after lunching with King Hussein who is on a two-day visit.

King Hussein said: "I would like to echo your feelings in welcoming the positive news we have heard today. This is a good step and a very important step and I hope it will bring a peaceful resolution to the crisis."

In Washington, Bush said his proposal of a meeting between Baker and Aziz was "one last attempt to go the extra mile for peace."

The United Nations has set a Jan. 15 deadline for Iraq to withdraw from Kuwait. The two-hour lunch was King Hussein's first meeting with Major, who assumed office in November. Major described the meeting as "useful and friendly."

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De Marco calls for peace conference on Mideast

Security Council deplores Israeli violence

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (Agencies) — U.N. General Assembly President Guido De Marco called Friday for an international peace conference on the Middle East, saying "the situation is becoming every day more serious, more sensitive."

At the U.N., for the fourth time since the Gulf crisis began, the United States Friday supported a Security Council action criticising Israel's treatment of Palestinians in the occupied territories.

All 15 members of the council, after three days of negotiations, approved a statement deploring the growing violence in the Gaza Strip and drawing attention to actions by Israeli forces against Palestinians.

The statement maintained the unity displayed by the council since it fired off a volley of resolutions against Iraq for its August 2 invasion of Kuwait.

The United States, which successfully inserted into the statement a condemnation of all violence in Gaza, interpreted the result as balanced and even-handed towards all parties. The statement expresses deep concern about the violence "especially actions by Israeli security forces against Palestinians" which led to scores of civilian casualties.

It says council members "deplore those actions, particularly the shooting of civilians." It also asks Israel to comply fully with the provisions of the 1949 Geneva convention, an international treaty on the protection of civilians in wartime, and says this convention applies to "all the Palestinian territories occupied by Israel since 1967, including Jerusalem."

De Marco's call for an international conference after meeting in the occupied West Bank with the Palestinian mayors of Bethlehem and nearby Beit Sahur and Beit Jala.

De Marco's plans to visit the Dheisheh refugee camp outside Bethlehem were cancelled when

meeting between top U.S. and Iraqi officials in Switzerland next week.

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(Continued on page 4)

shouted "Allahu Akbar" and waved a metal bar before he was shot to death by soldiers, said police inspector Moshe Caspi. The collisions occurred at about 8:30 a.m. (0630 GMT) over a distance of about 1.5 kilometres just north of the Erez army checkpoint that divides Israel from the occupied Gaza Strip.

Palestinians identified the bus divers as Mohammad Samir Katanani, 30, from Gaza's Jahlia refugee camp. Katanani had taken Palestinians to see their relatives held at Ashkelon prison in Israel, and was driving an empty bus back to Gaza when he hit the Israeli vehicles, Arab reports said.

He was two kilometres from Erez checkpoint when he swerved into the left lane, hitting a Renault with army license plates. In the car were an army officer and his family, Caspi said on Israel army radio.

The collision killed a woman

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France unveils Gulf plan; EC invites Aziz for talks

LUXEMBOURG (AP) — France Friday proposed a broad peace plan that calls for Iraq to pull out of Kuwait, with a promise it would not be attacked and a pledge to open international discussion on other Middle East issues.

French Foreign Minister Roland Dumas also urged his European Community (EC) colleagues to hold a meeting on the Gulf crisis in Luxembourg as soon as possible.

At a special meeting, Dumas told his EC colleagues that in view of the stalemate in the Gulf "Europe could not remain with its arms folded," said a French source, who asked not to be named.

Dumas did not insist on an Iraqi withdrawal before the Jan. 15 deadline, simply an announcement of intent.

The anti-Iraq alliance would then guarantee not to attack Iraq and the scene would be set

for one or two international conference on the Middle East, Dumas told his EC counterparts.

The EC agreed later Friday to ask Iraqi Foreign Minister Tariq Aziz to come to Luxembourg next Thursday to discuss the Gulf crisis.

The proposed meeting, decided upon at a special session of EC foreign ministers, would take place one day after Aziz has met with U.S. Secretary of State James Baker in Geneva.

"They have agreed on the 10th (of January) in Luxembourg," said a British source of the EC ministerial session.

In Paris, French President Francois Mitterrand said Friday that the U.N. Security Council should have another meeting on the Gulf crisis before Jan. 15 if Iraq ignores the deadline to quit Kuwait and war becomes possible.

"I think it would be a good thing for it to meet, because before the start of what would be a war we should bring together all the elements of the moment," Mitterrand said in answer to a question.

He said an eve-of-deadline meeting was "not obligatory" but in his opinion it would be desirable instead of relying on "the accumulation of facts" that had built up since the Security Council last discussed the crisis.

Mitterrand said that if Iraq announced its intention to quit Kuwait before the deadline it would have to be more than a "vague" promise.

Only a clear undertaking for a "total, programmed and verified withdrawal" would be acceptable, he said.

"Every day that passes reduces (Iraq's) credibility," Mitterrand added at an informal meeting with journalists after a new year ceremony at the Elysee Palace.

(Continued on page 5)

Baghdad said to advise embassies to move out

BAGHDAD (AP) — The Iraqi government has advised foreign diplomatic missions to prepare for moving out of the capital to temporary facilities 105 kilometres to the west, diplomatic sources said Friday.

The sources said the proposed relocation was conveyed to heads of diplomatic missions on Thursday, but that no date was suggested.

Meanwhile, the Iraqi News Agency (INA) denied reports that government institutions also would be moved out of the capital before the mid-January deadline for Iraq to withdraw from Kuwait.

"These reports are fabricated and ridiculous... Baghdad is the capital of steadfastness and victory and will remain so, protected by its men under the leadership of President Saddam Hussein," INA said in a commentary.

The diplomatic sources, who insisted on not being identified, said they were aware of reports that ministries and public departments might be relocated, but that they could not confirm them.

They said they had been advised only about a plan to relocate foreign missions.

One of the sources, an Indian diplomat, said: "It is not an order, but we have been advised to prepare for a possible relocation."

During the 1980-88 Iran-Iraq war, diplomats often sent their families to Habbaniya to escape missile attack on Baghdad.

Ramadi also is connected to an 800-kilometre road network that leads to the Jordanian border posts of Rutba and Mafrqa.

The Indian diplomat said the heads of foreign missions plan to meet Jan. 10 or Jan. 11 to discuss the proposal.

"We have asked the government to let us know what communication facilities we will have there," he said.

Egyptian, Saudi and Syrian ministers meet

CAIRO (Agencies) — Egypt's Foreign Minister Esmat Abdul Meguid flew to the Saudi capital of Riyadh Friday for a meeting with his Syrian and Saudi counterparts.

Abdul Meguid will meet with Saudi Arabia's Prince Saud Al Faisal and Syria's Farouq Al Sharaa to discuss recent developments in the Gulf crisis.

Since Iraq invaded on Aug. 2, the ministers have met three times. The first meeting was in Jeddah, the second in Damascus and the third in Cairo.

"These meetings have proved effective and important from the point of view of information exchange and coordination between the three countries especially on the Gulf crisis," Abdul Meguid told reporters before departing.

Egypt, Syria and Saudi Arabia have troops participating in the U.S.-led multinational force marshalled in the Gulf region.

Abdul Meguid said his country welcomes dialogue between Iraq and the United States, but he would not withdraw from Kuwait.

Abdul Meguid, who was accompanied by President Hosni Mubarak's top political adviser Osama Al Baz, described the Riyadh meeting as "conducive to Arab national interests and a boost to Arab causes interna-

ble relocation of our missions." He confirmed that Indian Ambassador Kamal Bakshi was approached by Foreign Ministry officials on the subject.

The sources said that under the plan, all 71 missions operating in Baghdad would move to Ramadi, a small city on the banks of Euphrates River.

Ramadi is 105 kilometres from the centre of Baghdad. It is adjacent to the largest holiday complexes in the Middle East including a four-star, 600-bed hotel.

The resort is equipped with three restaurants and bars, indoor and outdoor swimming pools, a sailing club, four tennis courts, one volleyball court, a mini golf course and a night club.

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Pressure grows for ceasefire in Somalia

NAIROBI (Agencies) — International pressure grew on Friday for a truce between Somali rebels and forces loyal to President Mohammad Siad Barre but fighting went on unabated in the capital, Mogadishu.

"There is not much sign of a ceasefire getting under way," said a Western diplomat in Nairobi in contact with his embassy in Mogadishu.

"The situation appears much as it has done over the past few days — the fighting continues and it's impossible to say who's on top."

Western governments have been trying to work out how to evacuate their citizens from the battle-torn Somali capital. On Thursday the United States joined the calls for a ceasefire.

The Organisation of African Unity (OAU) earlier appealed for an immediate truce and peace talks.

President Daniel Arap Moi of neighbouring Kenya, the Italian government and the European

Community have issued similar pleas.

Siad Barre, a former army commander aged about 70 who took power in a 1969 coup, repeated an impassioned call Thursday for a ceasefire.

"An official of the insurgent United Somali Congress (USC) told the Associated Press in Rome that the rebels would allow a ceasefire to evacuate foreigners from Mogadishu."

But Abdul Rahim Mubammad, the group's secretary for social affairs, said the rebels would not negotiate with Siad Barre and were preparing for a heavy assault on his remaining strongholds.

In Rome, where Italian officials were trying to mount a major rescue operation, a Foreign Ministry spokesman said the effort had been stymied by the rebels' previous refusal to halt fighting.

"As soon as there is a ceasefire we will go ahead with the evacuation," he said.

Karami says freeing hostages is priority

BEIRUT (R) — Prime Minister Omar Karami said Friday that freeing the 12 Westerners held hostage in Lebanon was a top priority of his newly formed national unity government.

He also said in an interview with Reuters that Lebanon was counting on Arab countries and the international community to help heal the wounds of 15 years of civil war that killed 150,000 people.

Six Americans, three Britons, two Germans and an Italian are held captive in Lebanon by extremists. Four of them have been hostages for more than five years and all have been prisoners for at least 19 months.

"No man on Lebanese soil should be held captive unjustly... the top duty of the Lebanese government is to work for the release of the hostages from a humanitarian aspect," said Karami.

Karami, a 55-year-old lawyer from the northern port of Tripoli, formed a 30-member unity cabinet on Dec. 24 that includes

(Continued on page 4)

American Citizens In Jordan

A new travel advisory has been issued by the U.S. Department of State.

For further information, Please call 604223 or 604214, Ext. 100

اعلان الى جميع الرعايا الاميركيين في الاردن

اصدرت وزارة الخارجية الاميركية بيانا جديدا حول سفر المواطنين الاميركيين المقيمين في الاردن.

مزيد من المعلومات الرجاء الاتصال بهاتف ٦٠٤٢٢٣ او ٦٠٤٢١٤ او فاكس ٦٠٤٢١٤

Bush, Congress fail to agree on war powers

By Laurence McQuillan
Reuter

WASHINGTON — President George Bush and top congressional leaders are embroiled in a dispute over the power to send U.S. troops into a war in the Gulf — and when it should be done.

The battle over U.S. constitutional authority, brewing since Bush sent troops to the Gulf after Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, is heating up as the Jan. 15 U.N. deadline for Iraqi withdrawal nears.

Bush met Thursday with 27 lawmakers in a private session aimed at defusing the tensions — but the meeting broke up with the two sides no closer than before.

"It is our view that the constitution requires the president to seek the prior approval of Congress for offensive military action in the Persian Gulf now," influential Senate Democratic leader George Mitchell said following the session with the Republican president.

Mitchell argued that sending American combat forces against Iraq troops clearly is an act of war, and under the constitution only the Congress can declare war.

"The president holds a country view," Mitchell said. "I don't believe we've persuaded him of our view and I know he did not persuade us of his view."

White House spokesman Martin Fitzwater said Bush refused to promise he would seek congressional approval before ordering Americans into combat.

"We will continue to consult with the Congress and we understand the constitutional responsibilities of the Congress and the president," Fitzwater said.

With the Jan. 15 mandate for Iraq's withdrawal rapidly approaching, Congress and the administration also are sharply divided over when force should be used to oust Iraq if it refuses to quit Kuwait.

Mitchell said there was disagreement over "whether the resort to force should be early, or whether the resort to force should be a truly last resort, only after all other means have been exhausted."

White House officials have said Bush favours military action soon after the U.N. deadline because he believes delays would benefit Iraq. Some members of Congress say sanctions should first be given a year to 18 months to work.

"We want to be supportive of the president," said Mitchell. "We want to enhance, not detract from his credibility, but it does us no good to sacrifice our constitutional principles to achieve those objectives."

The U.S. constitution gives Congress the authority to declare war but also sets the stage for a legal conflict by making the

president commander-in-chief of the armed forces.

In 1973 Congress passed the war powers resolution to limit foreign combat by U.S. troops. But the law has been virtually ignored through a series of conflicts.

It was enacted over then-President Richard Nixon's veto in reaction to U.S. involvement in Vietnam — an undeclared war that escalated and cost more than 58,000 American lives.

It is supposed to restrict a president's power to make war without a formal declaration. It also gives Congress a decisive say on when troops a president does commit to combat must come home.

Congress has not declared war since World War II and then only after Japan attacked Pearl Harbor in December 1941.

White House officials argue that presidents have committed troops to combat 211 times, but only sought declarations of war five times.

"Perhaps the president can scrounge up a scholar or two to defend his indefensible position," said Senator Edward Kennedy on the floor of the Senate.

The overwhelming weight of the evidence is against him," said the Massachusetts Democrat. "And for good reason, because the president is wrong — dead wrong — and thousands of American soldiers may soon be dead because of him."

Americans in no mood to go to war in Gulf

WASHINGTON (AP) —

Members of the newly convened 102nd U.S. Congress say the people back home are vexed, frustrated and apprehensive about the prospect of going to war in the Gulf.

"There's a general fear that the Vietnam syndrome is setting in — can't win, can't get out," said Representative George Slaughter, as hawks and doves alike reported Thursday they returned to the capital from a country perplexed.

The public is unwilling to tolerate Iraq's seizure of Kuwait, and does not want to undercut President George Bush's diplomacy — but it is in no mood to go to war, and is full of questions, they said.

"They keep asking me, 'Will there be war?' said Rep. Hamilton Fish, "what is going to happen?"

This opening day of Congress after a brief winter recess, was sobered by the knowledge that this Congress may be called upon to authorize — and finance — a war against Iraq that military leaders say could be brutal.

In the Senate, two liberal Democrats — Tom Harkin of Iowa and Brock Adams of Washington — tried to initiate a debate over whether a president can make war without Congress' formal approval.

The possibility of war is "being talked about in coffee shops, in the workplace, and in the homes," said Harkin. "Now is the time and here is the place to debate the constitutional prerogatives of the president of the United States."

But Senate majority leader George Mitchell, eager not to undermine Bush's new diplomatic initiative, managed to cut off debate before it got started.

In the corridors of the House, members told reporters that apprehension over war dominated their meetings with constituents.

Representative Jim McDermott, said more than 1,000 Seattle people attended his community meetings during the holiday break and "I don't find anyone who wants to go in."

"Sunday morning, I go into a supermarket for a newspaper and I run into the mother whose son is headed over there," Richard Durbin told a reporter. "She was breaking down in tears right there in a grocery aisle. This is the toughest decision we can face in public life."

Sangermeister said "the Vietnam syndrome" kept arising. He said people dread a long, drawn-out, indecisive war. The question they ask, he said, is, "Can we do it in five days?"

But Representative Arthur Ravenel, who represents the old naval port town of Charleston, South Carolina, said his voters think a congressional debate would be unproductive. The country has used military force in more than 250 instances, he said, but declared war only four or five times.

Chet Edwards, a freshman congressman from Texas said: "People are overwhelmingly committed to seeing that Iraq's aggression is reversed. 'But there are a lot of 20-year-old wives and husbands who would be widows in several months if we go to war.'"

U.N. chief offers trip to Baghdad

UNITED NATIONS (R) — Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar warned Thursday of war fever in the Gulf crisis and offered to go to Baghdad if it would help avert a military clash.

"I will go to Baghdad if they want me to be in touch with them," he said. "My feeling is that in the next 12 days we have all to be extremely active in order that military action does not take place."

Perez de Cuellar, in informal talks with reporters, also raised the possibility of a Security Council meeting on the Gulf to discuss measures short of war before the Jan. 15 U.N. deadline for Iraq to withdraw from Kuwait.

But in the face of objections from the United States and the Soviet Union, he spoke with reporters again later on Thursday and distanced himself from earlier comments on a possible council meeting, saying there had been a "tremendous misunderstanding."

Soviet Ambassador Yuli Vorontsov, speaking earlier, dismissed the idea of a new council

meeting. "My personal opinion is that we shouldn't do anything that will nullify the resolution that has been adopted inviting Saddam Hussein to vacate Kuwait by the 15th of January," he said.

Perez de Cuellar, who has been very uneasy about the use of force, said many mistakenly believed there would be war on Jan. 15, although military action was just one option.

"I think it is wrong to create this kind of psychosis of war on the 15th of January," he said. The U.N. chief also appeared to be laying the groundwork for his own role in solving the crisis but said he did not want to interfere or sow confusion in any of the planned talks between Iraq, the United States and its allies.

He said he hoped to see Iraqi Ambassador Abdul Amir Al Anhari Friday "to explore all possibilities to avoid a military conflagration."

On Thursday, he met the permanent representative of Luxembourg, Jean Feyder. Luxembourg's foreign minister, Jacques Poos, may get a mandate

from the European Community to open talks with Iraq after an EC meeting Friday.

Perez de Cuellar welcomed Washington's latest offer to Iraq for talks on Jan. 7, 8 or 9 saying he was "persuaded by the initiative of the Americans and their allies that everyone wants to avoid a military conflagration."

The Secretary-General last met Iraqi Foreign Minister Tariq Aziz in Jordan early in September but the session was unproductive.

Austria heads panel

Austria was selected on Thursday to replace Finland as chairman of the Security Council's committee supervising economic sanctions imposed against Iraq last Aug. 6.

Finland, one of the 10 non-permanent members on the 15-member council, has completed its two-year term.

Austrian Ambassador Peter Hohenfellner will be the new chairman of the committee to replace Marjatta Rasi, Finland's deputy permanent U.N. repre-

sentative, who has led the committee since its inception.

In another appointment, Indian Ambassador Chandra Shekhar was selected to replace Malaysia as chairman of the council's committee monitoring the arms embargo against South Africa.

The Security Council's committee reviews applications for sending goods to Iraq and complaints from nations suffering under the economic embargo imposed by the council.

To date, the committee has allowed only medical supplies to be sent to Baghdad and recognised that a host of nations are in economic need as a result of the embargo and rising oil prices.

The Security Council has five permanent members, the United States, the Soviet Union, Britain, France and China. Its other 10 members rotate on a two-year basis with five leaving the Council each year.

In 1991, the 15-member body comprises Austria, Belgium, Cuba, Ivory Coast, Ecuador, India, Romania, Yemen, Zaire and Zimbabwe in addition to the five powers.

Lebanon's unification hopes falter in Israeli-controlled south

By Eileen Alt Powell
The Associated Press

MARIYOUN, Lebanon — The Lebanese government's effort to reestablish its authority and end 15 years of sectarian strife faces stubborn resistance in this Christian-dominated enclave along the Israeli border.

The South Lebanon Army (SLA), the militia financed and trained by Israel to control the area, is deeply suspicious of the role Syria is playing in the pacification effort.

And it charges that Muslim fighters ordered out of Beirut under the Syrian-backed peace plan are increasingly targeting SLA posts in the south.

"It is a Syrian-directed government," complains Antoine Lahad, a former Lebanese army deputy chief of staff who commands the SLA. "If later on it's proven that this government acts freely and on a Lebanese basis, there might be contacts between us."

Lahad's stand is an indication of the difficulties Syrian-supported Lebanese President Elias Hrawi faces in trying to reunite fractured Lebanon, which until World War I was part of Syria.

Hrawi is struggling to implement an Arab League-backed peace accord that only became possible after an 11-month mutiny by rebel General Michel Aoun was crushed in October. The divided city was unified a month ago.

Hrawi has created a "greater Beirut" free of militias and is seeking to extend his authority to the rest of the country. However, several right-wing Christian and Muslim leaders have rejected his assertion of authority.

The SLA, from its headquarters on a rocky hilltop here, operates in Israel's so-called "security zone" in South Lebanon.

non. The 1,100-square-kilometre strip was carved out to protect Israel's northern border from the infiltration when the Jewish state withdrew the bulk of its troops in 1985 after a three-year occupation.

The zone is home to about 220,000 Lebanese, more than half of them Shi'ite Muslims. Christians, who feel themselves a beleaguered minority, make up the bulk of the 2,700 fighters in the SLA.

A sign in Hebrew at the headquarters entrance carries their motto: "Through courage and brainpower, the small can overcome the large."

NEWS ANALYSIS

The militiamen's "shoes, uniforms and equipment to the last tank and artillery shell are provided by Israel," according to an Israeli liaison officer, who gave his name only as Shraga.

Israel also spends \$5.5 million a year supporting an SLA-run government, complete with schools, hospitals and utilities. Israel says it will not abandon the area without "security" guarantees but insists it has no ambition to annex any of the land.

Shraga led Western reporters on a brief tour of SLA posts this week, including an artillery battery on a ridge near the ruined Beaufort Crusader castle that dominates the south.

Late last month, the battery turned its French- and Russian-made guns on nearby Muslim fundamentalist Hizbollah bases to retaliate for firing in Marjayoun.

"The present situation is that the Lebanon army is a puppet of the Syrian army," said Abu Bshara, commander of the

SLA's artillery units. "It will not trust them. I will trust Israel for a protective umbrella."

Neither Shraga nor the SLA officers would say how many Israeli troops operate in the zone, though up to 1,000 are believed assigned to the area.

Lahad insists that both Lebanese and Israelis benefit from the relationship. "The peace and security of the northern part of Israel depends, to a great extent, on peace and security in the south of Lebanon," he said.

That security, he adds, has been threatened with the Lebanese government's "greater Beirut" plan, which has forced Muslim militias out of the capital and into areas adjacent to the "security zone."

"This is to be added to the fact that the number of Palestinians in the south is increasing also, which means there is more pressure on our area," Lahad said.

He estimated that there were about 10,000 Palestinian and 1,000 to 1,500 Hizbollah fighters in South Lebanon who could pose a threat to Israel.

Lahad, 61, and a Maronite Christian from Lebanon's central Shouf mountains, barely survived an assassination attempt two years ago. He still suffers from its consequences — a nearly immobile right arm and lung damage that causes him to gulp air as he speaks.

Lahad admits the SLA could not operate without the Israelis, whom he sees as a balance to Syrian forces in eastern Lebanon and a buffer against the possibility of Syrian political dominance in Lebanon.

"In fact, 80 per cent of Lebanon is already under effective Syrian domination," Lahad said. "There remains this part of Lebanon where we are, and this we cannot in any way allow included in their zone of hegemony."

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel: 773111-19

PROGRAMME ONE
15:30 Teletext
16:00 Koran
16:30 Programme review
16:35 Children programme
17:30 Educational programme
18:00 News Summary
18:10 Local series
19:00 Programme review
19:30 News in Arabic
20:30 Arabic series
21:30 Programme review
21:50 Local programme
22:30 Arabic series
23:00 News in Arabic
23:10 Series continued

PROGRAMME TWO
18:00 Le Ciel de Fort Boyard
19:00 News in French
19:15 Aujourd'hui en France
20:00 News in Arabic
20:30 Good Morning Miss Bliss
21:00 Encounter
22:00 News in English
22:30 Feature film: "He's Not Your Son"

PRAYER TIMES
05:10 Fajr
06:32 Sunrise
11:41 Dhuhr
14:27 Asr
16:59 Maghreb
18:12 Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church Swiffield, Tel. 810740
Assemblies of God Church, Tel. 632785
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440
De la Salle Church Tel. 661757
Terresanta Church Tel. 623366
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 623541
Anglican Church Tel. 625383, Tel. 628343
Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 771361
St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751
Armenian International Church Tel. 685326
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 811295
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints Tel. 815817, 654932

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.
It will be partly cloudy and there will be a gradual rise in temperatures. Winds will be northwesterly light to moderate. In Agaba, winds will be northerly moderate and seas calm.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

Min./max. temp.
Amman 3 / 14
Agaba 12 / 23
Desert 4 / 14
Jordan Valley 10 / 21

Yesterday's high temperatures:
Amman 12, Agaba 21. Humidity readings:
Amman 97 per cent, Agaba 36 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY
AMMAN:
Dr. Mohammad Khalil 890294
Dr. Fayez Jallouh 624207
Dr. George Saboury 776781
Dr. Ahmad Al Nator 637934
First pharmacy 661912
Fendous pharmacy 776336
Al Asmaa pharmacy 637055
Nairookh pharmacy 623672
Al Salam pharmacy 636730
Yacoub pharmacy 644945
Shmeisani pharmacy 637660

IRBID:
Dr. Ali Al Shugairi (—)
Al Shamsa pharmacy (273825)

ZARQA:
Dr. Abdul Karim Khasabneh (—)
Khalifeh pharmacy 985417

EMERGENCIES
Food Control Centre 637111
Civil Defence Emergency 661111
Civil Defence Immediate
Rescue 630341
Rescue Police 192, 621111, 637777
Fire Brigade 891228
Blood Bank 775121
Highway Police 843402
Traffic Police 896390
Public Security Department 630321
Police Complaints 605800
Price Complaints 661176
Water and Sewerage
Complaints 897467
Amman Municipality
Complaints 787111
Telephone Information
(directory assistance) 121
Overseas Calls 010230
Central Amman Telephone

Repair:
Abdali Telephone Repairs 661101
Jordan Television 773111
Radio Jordan 774111
Water Authority 680100
Jordan Electricity Authority 815615
Electric Power
Company 636381
RJ Flight Information 08-53200
Queen Alia Int. Airport 08-53200

HOSPITALS
AMMAN:
Hussein Medical Centre 813813/32
Khaldi Maternity, J. Amn. 643281/6
Akhleh Maternity, J. Amn. 643441/2
Jabal Amman Maternity 643462
Malhas, J. Amman 636140
Palestine, Shmeisani 664171/4
Shmeisani Hospital 669131
University Hospital 845845
Al-Muassir Hospital 667227/8
The Islamic, Abdali 666127/37
Al-Ahli, Abdali 664164/6
Italian, Al-Mojazirah 777101/2
Al-Bashir, J. Ashraf 775112/6
Army, Marka 891617/15
Queen Alia Hospital 602240/50
Amal Hospital 674155

ZARQA:
Zarqa Govt. Hospital (09)983323
Zarqa National Hospital (09)991071
Ibn Sina Hospital (09)986732
IRBID:
Princess Basma Hospital (02)275555
Greek Catholic Hospital (02)272275
Ibn Al Nafes Hospital (02)247100
AQABA:
Princess Haya Hospital (03)314111

FOR THE TRAVELLER
QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (08)53200-5, where it should always be verified.
ARRIVALS
Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)
05:45 Singapore, Kuala Lumpur (RJ)

10:00 Damascus (RJ)
10:15 Agaba (RJ)
10:20 Dhahran (RJ)
10:30 New Delhi (RJ)
10:30 Cairo (RJ)
10:35 Karachi, Dubai (RJ)
10:55 Abu Dhabi, Bahrain (RJ)
10:50 Montreal, New York (RJ)
10:10 London (RJ)
10:10 Frankfurt (RJ)
05:30 Madrid (RJ)

Other Flights (Terminal 2)
09:15 Beirut (ME)
14:00 Bahrain (GF)
14:05 Cairo (MS)
14:00 Riyadh (SV)
23:10 Damascus, Paris (AF)
MARKET PRICES
Upper/lower price in fils per kg.
Apple 600 / 500
Banana 500 / 450
Banana (Mukammur) 450 / 400
Beans 400 / 350
Cabbage 100 / 50
Carrot 180 / 140
Cauliflower 160 / 100
Corn 180 / 120
Cucumber (large) 410 / 350
Cucumber (small) 300 / 400
Eggplant 180 / 140
Garlic 1400 / 1000
Lemon 200 / 150
Mallow 180 / 120
Marrow (large) 120 / 60
Marrow (small) 240 / 200
Onion (dry) 230 / 200
Onion (green) 150 / 100
Okra 600 / 500
Orange 180 / 120
Pepper (hot) 200 / 150
Pepper (sweet) 150 / 100
Potato 300 / 250
Radish 150 / 100
Sage 300 / 400
Spinach 120 / 80
Tomatoes 280 / 220

DEPARTURES
Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)
06:00 Agaba (RJ)
10:40 Tripoli (RJ)
12:40 Vienna, Frankfurt (RJ)
12:45 Amsterdam, New York (RJ)
12:45 London, Jeddah (RJ)
13:00 London (RJ)
13:15 Rome, Paris (RJ)
13:45 Geneva, Brussels (RJ)
21:30 Bahrain, Dubai (RJ)
21:45 Abu Dhabi, Dubai (RJ)
22:00 Cairo (RJ)
22:00 Doha (RJ)

Conference to tackle aspects of Gulf crisis

By P.V. Vivekanand
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Aspects of the Gulf crisis which have not been dealt with in depth are expected to be discussed Saturday at a one-day conference here.

The conference, organised under an initiative by His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, will discuss "those humanitarian and economic issues which have not been given the due attention by the international community," said Dr. Mazen Armouti, who is involved in organising the event.

The gathering will be attended by representatives of international organisations, experts and specialists as well as observers, Dr. Armouti told the Jordan Times.

The main focus of the round-table conference will be four working papers, he said.

The first paper, to be presented by Salameh Hammad, head of the Evacuee Welfare Committee, will deal with the prospect of Jordan finding itself hosting about one million refugees in the event of a military conflict in the Gulf.

Over 800,000 evacuees from Kuwait and Iraq passed through Jordan since early August, and Hammad, secretary-general of the Ministry of Interior, and other officials have said that the kingdom would find it very difficult to handle another massive human wave coming across the border if it was not sufficiently supported by the international community.

Jordan spent about \$60 million of its own funds on facilitating the transit of the evacuees until December, but it has received less than \$10 million from the international community.

The second paper, prepared by United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) Regional Director Richard Reid, will present the impact of the Gulf crisis on families and children.

Reid, releasing the annual State of the World's Children Report in mid-December, said that the Gulf crisis had compounded the financial situation of over one million Jordanians whom he said were living under the poverty line. "Hard hit among them," he said, are 130,000 to 160,000 who could not afford to meet their basic food needs.

The main impact of the situation fell on women and children, according to Reid, who

was quoting from the findings of a national survey conducted by UNICEF teams assisted by Jordanian officials.

The third working paper will deal with the impact of the Gulf crisis on the Jordanian economy and will be presented by Dr. Tayseer Abdul Jabbar, head of the Economic and Social Commission for West Asia (ESCWA).

In a report released last month, ESCWA estimated that Jordan and Jordanians had lost \$8.3 billion in assets and savings in Kuwait, trade with Iraq and Kuwait, direct Arab financial assistance, expatriate remittances and transit charges on Iraq-bound cargo.

The fourth topic will be the consequences of the Gulf crisis on the Palestinian people living in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip.

The Palestinians in the occupied territories are also among those hard hit by the Gulf crisis. The sole income for many Palestinian families in the West Bank and Gaza Strip was remittances from family members working in Kuwait.

Furthermore, as a result of what is widely perceived as Palestinian political support for Iraq some Gulf countries have also retrenched Palestinians working there.

The paper will be presented by Dr. Peter Gubser, head of the American Near East Refugee Aid (ANERA), Dr. Armouti said.

Other subjects will be presented in the course of discussions, but no other working papers have been formalised, he added.

Among the participants are U.N. General Assembly President Guido de Marco (who will arrive here from the occupied territories Saturday), United Nations Works and Relief Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) Commissioner-General Giorgio Giacomelli, former Turkish Prime Minister Bulent Ecevit and former American Assistant Secretary of State Richard Murphy.

The aim of the meeting, said Dr. Armouti, "is to open the eyes of the international community to the problems of the region in relation to the Gulf crisis and the possible consequences of a military conflict."

"We will leave it to the participants to decide what action to recommend to the international community," Dr. Armouti said.



His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, Thursday addresses a group of Italian journalists visiting Jordan (Petra photo)

Regent urges equal implementation of all Security Council resolutions

AMMAN (J.T.) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan the Regent, has called on the U.N. Security Council and the world community to give due attention to the Palestinian issue and said that resolution 681 concerning the Palestine problem should be implemented in "no less manner and resolve" than resolution 667 concerning the Gulf crisis.

Addressing a group of Italian journalists visiting Jordan, the Regent said that a U.N.-sponsored international conference on the Middle East was the most feasible way to find a set-

tlement to the Middle East issue and the Palestine problem.

The Regent stressed that there could be no peace in the Gulf or in the Middle East if a war broke out after Jan 15, date of the deadline set by the Security Council for Iraq to withdraw from Kuwait.

Prince Hassan called for reactivating and expanding the Euro-Arab dialogue, to cover all Arab states and promote their relations with the European countries; he underlined the importance of a Middle East security conference to ensure security and peace in the Mediterranean region.

The Regent referred to Saturday's round-table meeting in Amman to discuss the Gulf crisis and its harmful effects on Jordan saying that it was hoped that King Hussein's efforts in Enrope, which complement those of Algerian President Chadli Benjedid, would help end the crisis and its serious consequences on Jordan's economy.

The Regent said Jordan still believed that a settlement of the Gulf crisis through diplomacy was possible.

Law on loan agreement referred to House

AMMAN (J.T.) — The government has referred for endorsement to the Lower House of Parliament a draft law on a loan agreement concluded between Jordan and France.

Under the agreement, France will provide Jordan with a FF 100 million soft loan, payable over a period of 15 years, at an interest rate of 1.5 per cent according to a report in Al Ra'i Arabic daily.

The agreement, which grants Jordan a grace period of 90 months, provides for using up to 75 per cent of the loan for

financing costs of purchasing French goods and services ordered after Aug. 2, 1990.

The remaining 25 per cent will be used to pay prices of goods and services ordered for delivery before May 31 1990.

The loan will be settled in 16 equal installments payable every six months, beginning with the second half of the year following the expiry of grace period.

Under article 4 of the agreement, no amounts shall be withdrawn from the French treasury loan after Aug. 31, except under

extraordinary circumstances and in accordance with a special agreement between the two governments.

The services and goods to be financed by the loan will be agreed upon by both the Central Bank of Jordan, for the Jordanian government, and the French Embassy's economic and commercial advisor, for the French government.

The agreement shall be in force upon completing the legal procedures thereof and exchanging notifications to this effect.



A scene from the play Zakharefu Al Khalkhal Fi Mithalath Al Azman

Fantasy about man, time and dreams

By Abdullah Hasanat
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

ONE legend has it that man was a graceful bird flying freely in the skies of mother Earth. But one day, a mysterious power, from high above, had the bird fall. Upon contact with earth, some metamorphosis took place. The bird's beak turned into a face, its head grew larger and developed a brain, the wings became arms, while the blood seeping from its wounds quenched Earth's thirst and red poppies grew from it.

However, due to the great fall, the bird-turned-man lost its memory. From that moment on it started a quest for its past and an attempt to see the future, and by doing so it messed up everything including its present.

And now comes Sawzan Darwazah, a direct descendant of the bird-man, to attempt to untangle the mess made by her fallen Father. "The bird became a dream and the dream the master of man."

Darwazah and 12 young men and women, working together on the theme, the scenes, sequences and form, take us into a 90-minute nine-act fantasy that explores man's present agony, glimpses of his past and flashes of his dreams.

The play, "Zakharefu Al Khalkhal Fi Mithalath Al Azman," (Ornaments of the Ankle in the Triangle of Times) opens Jan. 9 at the Royal Cultural Centre.

Though ending on an optimistic note, the play portrays present-day man's agony "under the ozone layer," or more precisely without an ozone cover.

Adam and Eve of the day, played by Muhtaseb Aref and Naderah Omran, agonise in the middle of the stage over the dilemmas of humanity. "I am barren," she screams. "But I see in your depth the secret of existence," he attempts to assure her and himself at the same time.

Deprived of their wings, Adam and Eve make graceful attempts to float in the air. But they only manage to fly into their own dreams. They and shadows of the past (Hassan Darwazah and Zein Ghannam) hold dialogues with elements of the cosmos: The stars (Zeine Maqadadi, Ghalia Darwazah, Manal Zakaria), the sun (Amer Khafash), the moon (Hassan Sabailah), the sea (Najeh Mahmoud), the tree of life (Zein Ghannam and Mubamad Hussein) and the wind.

The dialogue, in standard Arabic, is accompanied by mystical rhythms played by Saad Judeh and Merei Neameh on a variety of percussion instruments.

The play, the idea of director Darwazah, who also wrote the script, was developed over four months in a workshop. Darwazah herself supervised the theatrical rehearsals, Zeina Maqadadi the actors' movements, Merei Neameh supervised the actor's diction and costumes were designed by Wafa Osous.

To prepare for the script, Darwazah says she had consulted Greek mythology, the Mesopotamian Gilgamesh Odysey and numerous scripts. She extensively read Don Quixote, Rasoul Hamzetouf, Nietzsche, and Gibril Khalil Gibran.

The "triangle of times," Darwazah is probing is that of "Adam and Eve is past, present and dreams."

The play symbolises the man's quest for truth. But since truth is relative and "only dreams are true," and since man only lives by dreams, viewers are presented with a one and half hours of dream full of music, dance and colours. A pleasant dream to take us away from the harsh realities of life.

Expelled Iraqi envoys deny involvement in 'illegal' acts

By Ghadeer Taher

Jordan Times Staff Reporter
with agency dispatches

AMMAN — Six Iraqi diplomats expelled from Britain on national security grounds arrived in Amman Friday and denied involvement in any illegal activities.

The reasons for the decision are baseless," said embassy Press Counsellor Naeel Hassan upon arrival at Amman Airport on the way to Baghdad. "It is part of the psychological warfare against Iraq... it was very unfair and unjust," said the envoy, who was among the eight diplomats ordered out.

He said he could not "predict" how his government

would react to the expulsion order. "We are still waiting," the envoy told journalists. The expulsion prompted speculation that Iraq would take action against the remaining British Embassy staff in Baghdad.

Britain Tuesday reduced its embassy staff from 16 to six. The British government, citing "public threats," Thursday gave the diplomats 24 hours to leave the country. London also ordered the expulsion of 67 Iraqi civilians, mostly students. They have one week to leave.

"The Iraqis have made a number of public threats. It is clearly prudent to take all precautions," Foreign Office spokesman quoted by Reuters said. "The Iraqi threats have been once again linked to the possibility of hostilities."

Hassan denied British accusations but warned that if there was a "war against Iraq then there are so many Arabs and Muslims in Western countries and of course they will attack targets there."

"They know very well we are not terrorists and we are working according to the law here," Hassan said in London before leaving to Amman.

The expulsion of the eight diplomats left 15 diplomats and 17 support staff in Iraq's central London embassy. There are about 6,000 Iraqis living in Britain.

Britain has sent over 30,000 troops to the Gulf to join the American dominated multinational forces massed against Iraq after its invasion of Kuwait.

House calls for APU extraordinary meeting

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Lower House of Parliament has sent out a call to the Arab parliamentarians to convene an extraordinary Arab Parliamentary Union (APU) meeting to discuss the Gulf crisis, and has formed delegations to tour Arab and Islamic countries to present the Jordanian views with regard to the crisis, according to House Speaker Abdul Latif Arabiyat.

Arabiyat made the statement in his office with ambassadors of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries in Amman for a review of the general situation in the Gulf region and prospects for a peaceful settlement.

At the meeting held upon the ambassadors' request, Arabiyat voiced Jordan's keenness on maintaining Arab solidarity and unity and deplored "any differences that may inter-Arab relations and serve the goals of Israel and the enemies of the Arab Nation," according to the Jordan News Agency, Petra.

Arabiyat warned against foreign intervention which could lead to a disintegration of the Arab World and called for unity of Arab ranks in the battle against Zionism and colonial powers.

Arabiyat said that his meeting with the GCC ambassadors was a step in the right direction and noted that Jordan tried to deal with all inter-Arab issues with an open mind and in a manner that would safeguard Arab solidarity.

Arabiyat urged the GCC countries to rectify their stand with regard to Jordan which, he said, was seeking to reach a peaceful settlement to the Gulf issue to avert a war that would have catastrophic consequences.

The Kuwaiti ambassador to Jordan said in a statement at the meeting that the GCC countries were determined to maintain solid links with Jordan in a drive to safeguard Arab solidarity.

The Kuwaiti ambassador voiced deep regret over the present divisions among Arab ranks and urged Arab countries to stand united in the face of plots hatched by the Zionist enemy.

Arabiyat said he discussed with the ambassadors, who represent Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Qatar, Oman, Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates, relations between Jordan and their respective countries and said that parliamentary delegations which would be leaving on their tour soon would go to all the Gulf states.

Jordan last month returned its ambassador to Riyadh after recalling him three months ago for consultations. Saudi Arabia has not yet reciprocated the move.

The recalling of the ambassador followed Saudi Arabia's decision to cut oil supplies to Jordan and to reduce the staff of the Jordanian Embassy in Riyadh to a minimum.

Rally commemorates Fateh

By Mariam M. Shahin
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — An estimated 25,000 people came to show their support for Al Fateh, the largest faction of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), at an international fair ground just outside of the Jordanian capital Thursday afternoon.

Men, women and children sang and chanted slogans as Salah Khalaf, second to Chairman Yasser Arafat in the PLO hierarchy, told them that Palestine "shall be liberated from the sea to the sea."

Khalaf, the final speaker of an impressive list of both Jordanian and Palestinian speakers who had come to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the PLO faction which was officially founded on Jan. 1, 1965, hailed

Jordan for seeking a peaceful solution to the Gulf crisis, it's democratic changes and its continued support of the Palestinian intifada.

Khalaf told a cheering and often unruly crowd that the "first voice coming out of liberated Jerusalem will call for unity with Jordan."

Khalaf also called for Palestinian unity and commended all political factions in the PLO for their "unyielding support to liberate the homeland." Naming each faction and group by name, Khalaf did not mention Hamas, the Palestinian arm of the Muslim Brotherhood which has refused to join the PLO ranks.

Among the prominent Jordanian speakers at the rally was Speaker of the Lower House Dr. Abdul Latif Arabiyat who told the crowd that Jordan would

remain the place for continued support of the Palestinian people.

"We stand against aggression to prove we are one nation," Arabiyat said. He also assailed Israeli plans supported by the U.S. and said the intifada chartered the road for Jihad (holy war) and liberation.

"Palestinians are sacrificing their lives every day, women and children are killed by Israeli occupiers every day and yet we hear no word of human rights violations from the United States," Arabiyat told the crowd.

Speakers belonging to all political trends participated in the rally voicing their support for the Palestinian struggle. The rally drew people from different parts of the city who came to show their support for Fateh.



ARABIYAT CONFERS WITH FORMER INDONESIAN INFORMATION MINISTER: Lower House of Parliament Speaker Abdul Latif Arabiyat discussed at a meeting in Amman.

and Indonesia's role in this concern. Arabiyat told the ambassador that a Jordanian parliamentary delegation would be visiting Indonesia soon, in the course of a tour of Arab, Islamic and probably European nations, to present Jordan's views with Minister Burhanuddin Mohammad Dia means of regard to the Gulf crisis and the Kingdom's efforts to achieve peace. Indonesia's ambassador to Jordan was present at the meeting, and current efforts to solve the issue peacefully.

Food coupons distributed

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Ministry of Supply announced that it had commenced distributing food coupons through 75 centres around the country and that distribution would continue from now and until March 31, 1991; the coupons will be valid only for the first four months of this year.

According to ministry officials, there are now 19 such centres in the Amman Governorate, 23 in Irbid, nine in Zarqa, six in Balqa, six in Mafraq, three in Karak, four in Tafleeh, two centres in Aqaba and Madaba each and one in Maan Governorate.

Citizens wishing to benefit from the coupons and buy milk, sugar and rice at subsidised prices, should produce their ration cards and valid family registration books to get them," said ministry officials.

Only Jordanian families can benefit from the subsidised items and each person can get one and a half kilogramme of rice and sugar per month and one kilogramme of powdered milk every four months.

Stores and supermarkets are stocked with all types of supplies and there are no shortages,

Air fares hiked

By a Jordan Times
Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Airline ticket prices increased by another six to nine per cent, depending on the destination, as of Jan. 1, 1991, airline sources said Friday.

The increase in fares follows International Air Transport Association (IATA) recommendations, a Royal Jordanian (RJ) official told the Jordan Times. "IATA took the decision as a result of the increase in oil and insurance prices resulting from the Gulf crisis," said the official.

Ticket for Arab destinations will increase by six per cent; eight per cent is the increase for destinations in Europe and the Far East and nine per cent increase to North American cities. The increase affecting North American destinations will take effect Jan. 15.

According to the official, RJ tickets "do not carry the additional \$50 to \$100 insurance on each ticket levied by other carriers."

"The airline industry is going through a difficult period caused by a combination of adverse economic trends, the Gulf crisis and continuing structural changes in the industry itself," IATA Director General Dr. Gunter Eser said last month.

Since the Gulf crisis erupted over five months ago, five major airline companies have already taken decisions to suspend their flights to Jordan because "it is no longer profitable under the present circumstances," according to one European airline official.

Most airlines cited the dramatic rise in fuel prices, high "war risk" insurance, and the decrease in passengers as a result of the Gulf crisis.

Alawneh says government determined to help farmers

AMMAN (J.T.) — The government is determined to deal with the grievances facing the Jordanian farmers, especially the question of debts, and the Ministry of Agriculture is taking steps in that direction, according to minister of agriculture Mohamed Alawneh.

In his first statement, following his appointment to the post in the latest government reshuffle, Alawneh said that the government planned to support farmers because "their work constitutes the backbone of the national economy."

"There is a great need for Jordanians to return to the land and to exploit farmlands for an increase in production in a bid to attain food security," Alawneh said in his statement to the Jordan News Agency, Petra.

Referring to the heavy damage to crops, especially to the tomato crop this year in the Jordan Valley region due to the harmful effect of the "white fly", the minister said that ministry teams would be touring the affected areas to estimate the

extent of losses and the government would try to help farmers overcome these losses.

According to press reports, the total area damaged by the white fly is estimated at 20,000 dunams and losses are estimated at JD 10 million.

The reports said that the white fly had been affecting tomato crops growing in the Deir Alla and South Shuneh areas since 1978, and all attempts to eliminate the pest had been in vain.

Lack of rainfall is said to create an opportune climate for the white fly to spread, said the reports quoting agricultural engineers in Karameh and Shuneh.

Prime Minister Mudar Badran told Parliament last month that the government had allocated JD 9.8 million to finance projects during 1991 aimed at ensuring food security for the country and helping farmers deal with problems resulting from weather conditions and other emergencies. JD 500,000, the prime minister had said, had been allocated for producing cereals,

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published in English by the Jordan Press Foundation. Established 1972.

جريدة الأردن سياسية مستقلة تصدر بالانجليزية عن المؤسسة الصحفية الأردنية. تأسست 1972.

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The Jordan Times is published daily except Fridays.
Subscription and advertising rates are available from the Jordan Times advertising department.

Doing is knowing

WASHINGTON'S belated offer to have U.S. Secretary of State James Baker meet his Iraqi counterpart Tariq Aziz may be just a last-ditch public relations effort to silence opposition to war in the Gulf by the U.S. Congress and the European Community. There is growing evidence that rejection of the war option by both Democratic and Republican leaderships in the U.S. legislature is mounting steadily and has developed into a formidable block against armed belligerency over the Kuwaiti conflict. And with the foreign ministers of the European Community presenting their own peace initiative at the conclusion of their Luxembourg meeting, the U.S. may also "had" in mind to preempt the European "meddling" in the Gulf crisis and prevent it from coming to fruition. France, Italy and Germany have been sending behind-the-scenes signals one after the other to the White House that they have growing qualms about destroying everything in order to save something in the Gulf. Being most directly affected by any outbreak of hostilities in the Gulf area, the EC countries have been sounding the alarm that their national interests do not necessarily correspond with those of U.S. President George Bush and his administration.

Iraq is therefore faced with a paradox. By accepting the U.S. offer to begin talks in Geneva may mean the abortion of the European initiative. On the other hand, to reject outright the U.S. initiative would have made Iraq look as though it is putting one obstacle after the other in the face of peace talks. With hopes pinned more than ever on the European brokerage for peace in the Gulf, Iraq may wish to accord priority to the EC countries' initiative since they seem to comprehend more than their big ally the U.S. that Baghdad must be seduced with a carrot in order to make it budge from its rigid position on the Kuwaiti occupation. Under the circumstances, the Iraqi leadership may engage the Bush administration with very early negotiations in order to leave a breathing space for the European countries to act before it is much too late. The European foreign ministers may still contemplate contingency plans should the Baker-Aziz talks end up deadlocked by agreeing during their Luxembourg meeting on a set of proposals that would be activated the minute it becomes obvious that the Iraqis and the Americans on their own cannot bridge the gap between them.

Accordingly the EC foreign ministers should go ahead with their plans on the assumption that the Aziz-Baker talks would fumble. A miracle may not be born at the conclusion of the envisaged Aziz-Baker talks but such a meeting deserves to be given the benefit of the doubt. As long as Europe will be there ready and able to intervene at the last minute, there can be no harm in going ahead with proposed Baker-Aziz exchange of views. If worse comes to the worst, Iraq would at least know that it has not left any stone unturned in the tortuous quest for reasonable and equitable accommodation in the Gulf region.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

THE proposed meeting in Switzerland between James Baker and his Iraqi counterpart Tariq Aziz is bound to be beneficial and that is why the move was welcomed by King Hussein, the British prime minister and other world leaders as well as the U.N. secretary-general, said Al Ra'i daily Friday. No matter which side took the initiative for the meeting, the move is a welcome development because it represents a last ditch attempt to avert war in the Gulf, said the paper. It is noted however, that the proposal for the meeting came one day before the convening of European community foreign ministers in Brussels to discuss the issue as well as the Middle East question, said the paper. This proposal, the paper added, should not deter the European Community from assuming a leading role in mediating in the issue and in helping the two sides to reach a final agreement. It said that Washington and Baghdad are now called on to open the way for their ministers to achieve progress in their negotiations by providing a healthy political atmosphere free of all forms of threats and ultimatums if the coming talks are to succeed. The European countries are urged now to pursue their own efforts for a solution so that the Americans can not be left alone to deal with the question in a manner that would impose American hegemony on the crisis, the paper noted. It said that the Baker-Aziz meeting should mark the beginning of a new endeavour on the part of the world community in general and the European Community in particular to delve into serious talks for a settlement.

As was expected, the United States administration has taken a U-turn and given up its former insistence not to have any dealings with Iraq except under its own terms, said Al Dustour Arabic daily. The paper said that Washington's offer to open talks between Tariq Aziz and James Baker over the Gulf issue reflects the Bush administration's desire to take urgent steps that would save America's credibility before the Jan 15 deadline. The U.S. administration's decision to open direct talks with Baghdad underline the importance of the solid and firm stand of the Iraqi leadership which has been showing determination to confront the challenge posed by the U.S.-led alliance said the paper. But it should be noticed that the U.S. offer for talks represents a positive development at this juncture and it is one that came in response to repeated calls by the American public, and the peace-loving nations of the world for negotiations with Iraq to avoid a catastrophic war, said the paper. Needless to say the opening of the door to negotiations is considered a major political gain for the Iraqi leadership which had rejected all forms of intimidation and blackmail and insisted on fair and just treatment, said the paper. The paper expressed hope that the new dialogue which will also be followed by others between Iraq and European nations will pave the ground for peace and save the Arabs and the world from catastrophes.

View from Amman

Living in the shadow of a sword

NOW that the new year, 1991, has just begun, and the beginning of the last decade of the twentieth century ushered in the hope is once again rekindled that, at last, sanity may prevail in the Gulf. So far one of the most singular features of the new year is the Jan. 15 deadline, itself an unprecedented occurrence in historical annals. Never before in recorded memory has such a definite deadline been set between belligerent armies. Is this the age of insanity? Are we going back to the cave?

Once again, we, Arabs have reminded that we still live in the shadow of the sword of Western intrigue and the black cloud of hatred created by Israel. The combination of these two forces: the West and Israel along with the merciless underground powers of the Zionist organisation, have maintained the insane and violent situation that continues to pervade the entire Middle Eastern area. And should resorting to arms become a reality on, or after the Jan. 15 deadline this insanely uncertain situation promises to become a permanent feature of the area well into the twenty-first century.

That is why the hope that sanity will prevail is so desperate and the need for reconsideration by all the parties to the dispute, so acute.

Against the prospects of this bleak background however, some bright spots remain. Chief among these are: the continued efforts of His Majesty King Hussein, the first world leader to emphasise the need for a peaceful settlement of the Gulf crisis, now commencing his personal efforts with an Arab and a European trip; the efforts of President Chadli Bendjedid; the contemplated Saudi, Syrian, and Egyptian meeting on this coming Friday which is to coincide with a meeting of the members of the European Community are also welcome. The European effort, first called

for by German Foreign Minister Genscher will hopefully work towards convincing President Bush that the possibilities of peace are there and that they should be pursued.

Encouraging also are the efforts of the Japanese as well as those of the foreign minister of Yugoslavia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement. Most encouraging however, are the peace efforts within the United States itself where many congressional leaders have added their voices to the growing popular opposition of most cities and towns in the country.

Of course, questions of war or peace begin in the minds and the hearts of men. Vital is the question: what does the United States, leading the Western military coalition in the Gulf, want? Oil? Strategic hegemony or what?

President Saddam Hussein has already indicated that Arabs cannot drink oil and that this commodity will continue to flow northward and westward as usual. Two major developments that occurred in the 1980's insure American strategic hegemony not only regionally but globally as well. First, the strategic treaty of alliance and cooperation between the United States and Israel, making us in the Arab World wonder who moves whom? This strategic alliance concluded in the Reagan administration has essentially given Israel the strategic depth of the power and the might of the United States militarily, technologically, politically and economically. It made Israel not only a regional but also an international power so it in turn helped in the emergence of the second major development of the 1980s: The collapse and political capitulation of the Soviet Union.

The two events are closely related to each other and future historians of the affairs of this epoch will certainly be able to see the connection more clearly than we do at the moment. How did

Mikhail Gorbachev come to preside not only over the collapse but also the possible dismemberment of one of the mightiest powers in the history of man; an empire that once not only commanded in the one of the greatest military but also ideological powers in the world? Who, and for whose benefit, was Pandora's box of world? Who, and for whose benefit, was a plan or a blue-print centrifugal forces opened thus, and without a plan or a blue-print of the future of the Soviet Union? Or was the future of someone else in mind? Is the timing of the conclusion of the strategic alliance with the United States and the opening up of the flood gates of Soviet Jewish immigration a historical coincidence? Who is providing the material and who is providing the human resources to Israel and for what purpose?

These terrible questions are closely related to what is now taking place in the Gulf area. Iraq's and the Arab linkage of the taking place in the Gulf area stems from our experience with Zionism and its blind anti-historical fundamentalist drive to establish an empire. It is hoped that neither President Bush, nor other Western leaders, will, in the final analysis, realise that should they follow the Israeli advice nothing may remain but ashes.

And so it comes to pass that after all is said and done, this writer remains optimistic about the prospects of a peaceful resolution. To those amongst us, who like Israeli radicals, want conflict since it is the only way to deal with Israel, we must emphasise that Israel one day will be contained and tamed. We must have confidence in ourselves and in our future. Our nation has faltered in the past and yet resurrected itself on several occasions. We can do it again. Peace is the master of all judgments and surely our peace can triumph over the Israeli death wish.

Talks

(Continued from page 1)

The King, who arrived Wednesday, was scheduled to continue his trip Friday with meetings in France, Germany, Italy and elsewhere, Foreign Minister Taher Masri said. The King also was to meet with leaders of Luxembourg, which assumed the rotating presidency of the European Community on Jan. 1.

The King's meeting with Major was attended on the Jordanian side by Royal Court Chief Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker and King Hussein's Political Advisor Adnan Abu Odeh, while it was attended on the British side by Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd.

The Aziz statement, on Friday came after the six-member, ruling Revolutionary Command Council met in emergency session in Baghdad to discuss the U.S. proposal.

Aziz said his government had hoped the United States would have behaved with more respect towards the right of countries to fix dates for their presidents to meet with foreign dignitaries. This was an apparent reference to Bush's refusal to accept Iraq's offer of Jan. 12 Baghdad talks with Baker. Washington had said it was too close to the Jan. 15 U.N. deadline.

While House spokesman Martin Fitzwater said Friday that the United States was encouraged by the decision to hold talks in Geneva.

"Obviously we made the offer (of talks) in a spirit of a final attempt at peace and it does give us some hope that they have accepted," Fitzwater told reporters. "And even though we don't have any details yet... it is an encouraging sign at least that they're willing to talk."

Fitzwater, in announcing Bush's offer Thursday, said Baker would not negotiate with Aziz but would simply repeat the U.N. demand that Iraq quit Kuwait.

Baker is due to leave for Europe Sunday on a trip that also will take him to the Gulf region for talks with allied governments there.

A Swiss official has said Baker planned to arrive in Geneva on Tuesday night for a 21-hour stay. Switzerland later said its embassy in Baghdad was informed that Aziz would attend.

Bush will meet U.N. Secretary General Javier Perez de Cuellar at Camp David in Maryland on Saturday to discuss the crisis and will deliver a national radio address on the Gulf at noon the same day, the White House announced.

Fitzwater said Bush's meeting with Perez de Cuellar would focus on "simply sharing all the knowledge that the president and the secretary general have on different people's positions... (and) how (Iraqi President) Saddam Hussein will react to the Jan. 15 deadline."

He said no new initiatives or missions were expected to emerge from the meeting with Perez de Cuellar.

Bush, buoyed by a poll showing Americans support his Gulf policy despite rising war jitters, told congressional allies Friday he had extended his latest offer for talks because he wanted to "give peace another shot."

The president discussed the Gulf crisis and the Jan. 15 deadline during a White House meeting with fellow Republicans from the House of Representatives.

The Baker-Aziz meeting in

Switzerland next week has temporarily muted critics in Congress who have urged Bush to do everything possible to seek a peaceful resolution.

A survey by the Washington Post newspaper and ABC News found that 65 per cent of those polled believe the United States should go to war if it is deemed necessary and that 82 per cent believe Bush should move within a month after the Jan. 15 deadline expires.

It said seven out of 10 Americans believe Congress should be more actively supporting Bush in the Gulf crisis.

Only one out of six interviewed for the poll felt members of the House and Senate should be more critical of the president.

The Washington Post also reported that Saddam, in talks with Algerian President Chadli Benjedid last month, sought guarantees that Iraq would not be attacked by the United States or Israel following a withdrawal from Kuwait.

The newspaper said "sources high in the Algerian government" described this as a begged-offer to withdraw by Saddam and a major change from his earlier insistence that Kuwait would remain an integral part of Iraq.

"What we believe to be going on is that the Algerians have had some success in getting Saddam to consider alternatives," a State Department official said when asked about the report.

"They feel they have Saddam at least thinking about other options," added the official, who asked not to be identified.

Lebanon

(Continued from page 1)

rebuilding," Karami said.

"Militias should be dissolved if a true state is to be built... we as a government admit that we can't solve this issue alone," Karami said of the private armies, which with 50,000 gunmen are stronger than the regular troops.

"We are certain that the international and Arab backers of the peace process and Syria will help us in overcoming this issue," the prime minister said.

The leaders of the country's two main Christian parties, the Lebanese Forces (LF) militia and the right-wing Falange Party, have refused to take their posts in Karami's government.

LF chieftain Samir Geagea and Falange leader George Saadeh have complained the cabinet was "unbalanced" because it had too many pro-Syrian leaders and called for reorganisation.

Karami said the government will not be affected if the two Christian leaders maintained their stands because "the move towards reconciliation is too powerful to be stopped."

"We were surprised by the objections... all conditions that we are hearing today to achieve a balance are unjust and can't be implemented," Karami said. "Any objection should be discussed within the cabinet."

"Their demands contradict the Taif agreement. Therefore we reject these issues... because accepting them means contradicting the Lebanese constitution," he said.

Karami said his government also planned to free South Lebanon from Israeli occupation through the implementation of U.N. Resolution 425 which calls for the unconditional withdrawal of the Jewish state from its self-proclaimed "security zone."

Our guests from the West remain safe in our midst

By Mahmoud Al Kayed

RADIO stations and news agencies shower us daily with warnings and statements by foreign ministries of Western nations calling on their nationals living in Jordan and Yemen to leave these two countries before the Jan. 15 deadline set by the U.N. Security Council for Iraq to withdraw its troops from Kuwait.

Had these countries been keen on safeguarding the lives of their nationals who might be caught in cross-fire should a war break out in the region, we would have accepted these warnings; but these Western governments are basing their warnings to their nationals on the assumption that they would be in danger of reprisals and assaults on them by the local inhabitants in the event of war in the Gulf.

The British Foreign Office and foreign ministries in the other European countries and the United States seem to have ignored the fact that our Jordanian people do not deal with foreign nationals on the basis of their government's stand vis-a-vis Arab causes, as Europeans and they tend to forget that foreign nationals in Jordan are considered as guests enjoying full care and protection and security in accordance with the norms of Arab hospitality. Concern over the welfare of foreign nationals is indeed a false one, and seems that it emanates from a vindictive

and fanatic mentality barbed against people of the world by the hopeful successors of the British colonial empire who do not give any respect or value to humans.

Jordan has always been an oasis of security and stability; and all foreign nationals here are regarded as guests who would not be harmed on account of their nationality or because their governments are hostile to our Arab Nation. For Jordan, a foreign national is different from his own government, and this is a fact that does not require proof. Jordan's government and people have respect for all peoples of the world and their human rights; and they realise that many of the peoples of the world support Arab just causes and demand that their governments refrain from interfering in our region's affairs. Moreover, world-wide demonstrations have been staged in various Western capitals in which tens of thousands of people took part, raising their voices against war, condemning all trends towards aggression and injustice and oppression, and calling for justice and peace.

Therefore, all foreign nationals whether they are journalists, tourists or businessmen are quite safe and secure in Jordan; and the Jordanian people realise that the foreign nationals' views are totally different from those of their governments in the West.

The dangers of a weak man acting strong

By Edward Pearce

DOES anyone share my feeling that the grand crank-up for war in the Gulf, as well as being frightening to any onlooker with a tinge of imagination, is also comic? It is partly the scurrying around by the British after more ammunition, faintly reminiscent of the great Victorian cordite crisis, and partly the comic indignation of the threats coming out of the President, Mr. Baker, the U.S. Defence Secretary and various hot and hothot British. There have also been the embarrassing contradictions from the military, like General Schwarzkopf's judgment that a war will take six months, not the White House line at all.

Terrific and wrong as a war would be, there is something comforting in the fo-fumfery of Mr. Bush. A man truly disposed to war, and ready to commit all the attendant crimes, does not talk like that. Indeed, a war is possible but not because Mr. Bush wants one. Apart from a crowd of truly unpleasant civilian strategic advisers and Lady Thatcher, it is difficult to say who does want a war. But a war we may get because an operation begun to sustain Saudi Arabia and embargo Saddam has been upped by incompetent megaphone diplomacy into a demand for unconditional surrender.

Let us quickly run through some of the points made as the president shouted himself down.

Saddam is another Hitler. Disgusting as he is, Saddam operates not with a good chance of conquering the world, but with no prospect even of conquering part of the Arabian Peninsula. It took him eight years to win on points against Iran, gains now surrendered. In all his ambitions he is shadowed and watched not just by a far from broken Iran, but by a bitter enemy in Syria and by Turkey, militarily the most competent nation in the region.

If Saddam is conquered, we will have created a new order. The Arabs have a great nervous pride and complex religious sensibilities. A Western "Christian" victory in Arabia

will inspire short term synchophany and long-term hatred. Saddam is a hero to the Palestinians as a result of the conflict. Whose hero will he be or his successors be among Arab peoples presently quiet and comfortable?

The U.N. is involved. The U.N. is the same meaningless wind band it always has been. Involvement in wars is measured by attribution of the dead. On "our" side the dead will be overwhelmingly American, with a scatter of Arabs and British. This is an American war fought to recover a client state and maintain face with oil producers, with Britain as highland gillie. You will look a long way for French, German and Italian dead.

There have been other instigators of dreadfulness sharing the noisy innocence of Mr. Bush. The Austrian satirist Karl Kraus portrayed Franz Josef on stage as God in a long nightshirt saying "Ich hab' es nicht gewollt" — I didn't want it to happen.

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What strikes one, now as then, is the inadequacy of the protagonist. George Bush is nobody's twelfth choice of world leader. The truly frightening aspect of this amiable make-believe Texan is that his domestic politics look like de-ranged spaghetti. Two of his lieutenants, Sununu (White House coordinator) and Darman (budget director) have engaged in a ferocious quarrel with Republican congressmen at which the president can only wave a broken wrist.

The polls have shown since before the Gulf that he is seen domestically as a wimp. Is there anyone more dangerous on earth than a weak man acting strong?

The risk is that Bush's noisy

attempts to avoid war by shouting about it will bring it about. One cannot commend too strongly the perception of Adrian Hamilton in the Observer that Saddam's likeliest motivation was not world conquest or even Arab domination, but an army on his hands and the fact of being broke.

Such a man is not placed to climb down, certainly not below the 1961 boundaries, the few square kilometres which can pass for a triumph. Otherwise, facing humiliation he is tempted to gamble to the very brink, reserving to himself the Wagnerian option of firing oil wells and going down with the world economy.

Which leads one to consider the wisdom of American leadership and our over-ready acceptance of it. It never seemed to me at the time that any great risk was involved in the Cuban missile crisis. Kennedy was a slight, oversold first but he was surrounded by first class advisers. Bush is taking advice from a school of

post-adolescent admirers of Clansworth, war gamblers, players with fire who do not know that fire is hot.

Khrushchev was in every particular sane and realistic, playing for gains and placed to make concessions. There simply wasn't going to be a war. Saddam is an adventurer, shrewd and not a fool but volatile and informed more by myths than orthodox intelligence. There most certainly could be a war, one to kill and burn by alternate stages.

So what sort of world leadership so overreaches itself, taking such risks to such conceived ends? Some of the fault surely lies in the U.S. herself. When Stalin was at his high point, the U.S. seemed a

great and cherishable ally, not less so because of able liberal leaders like Truman and Acheson.

But there has been a long era of U.S. non-understanding worldwide. The support of despicable regimes, from the Guatemalan putschists in 1954, through Marcos, the Somoza family, Ngo Diem, Hugo Banzer in Bolivia and the torturer and stadium executioner Pinochet, ought to have been evidence to us of a U.S. long engaged in hysterical realpolitik, unrealistic actually.

Any sort of criminal, any thief or psychopath, sound on communism was good for financial and moral underpinning. At the end of that list, to contain the new anti-Americanism of militant Islam, came Saddam Hussein!

The U.S., unable at home to contain a social collapse which has made murder there roughly what taking and driving away is here, is not morally equipped for the leadership of anything. A decade back she elected as president a senescent, rambling dolt who thought the South African homelands policy was a mark of liberalisation. Bush is the improvement. He is a decent enough man for little things but the impression is of Tom King ruling a country.

The unspoken assumption of the European states confronting the Gulf is that they will throw confetti at this wedding but they are not getting into bed. The British, in the way of a cashed amorist, are pathetically keen. We are attached to the U.S. by the old Ditchley Park and English-speaking Union assumptions about affinity, also what Margaret Thatcher called staunchness.

Britain is not even a decent jockey. We relive past glories after failing in the making and selling which constitute relevance. We don't sell cars or electronics or even beer, but we have guardsmen, tanks and the SAS. This is, or should be, a world with little need for major engagements. But as the U.S. in decline thrashes around towards war, Britain, long passed under, reaches up to give her a helping hand — The Guardian.

French plan

(Continued from page 1)

attack, and at least one international conference to be held on all Middle East issues.

Iraqi President Saddam Hussein has insisted a withdrawal from Kuwait must be linked to a resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

The French source also said "one should examine the possibility of finding a solution concerning the general security of the region."

France also foresees a diplomatic role for non-aligned and Arab nations and the United Nations.

In Paris, Mitterrand repeated that an international conference on the wider problems of the Middle East, including the Arab-Israeli dispute and the Palestinian question, should be treated as a matter of urgency.

He expressed disappointment that the Security Council, because of U.S. reluctance, had not passed a resolution to this effect but simply adopted a declaration.

Mitterrand also said Baker would visit Paris for talks next Tuesday.

He said relations with Bush were very cordial and France was a loyal ally of the United States, but no one could dictate to it. France would abide strictly to the terms of U.N. resolutions on the Gulf crisis.

"All the rest... doesn't concern us and I will certainly not commit any French soldier to an objective which was not explicitly expressed by the Security Council," he said, stressing that the United Nations did not call for Iraq's destruction.

Asked about reports that some in Washington were pressing for the destruction of Iraq's war capacity, Mitterrand said: "I do not favour preventive war... France does not consider itself the world's policeman."

Spanish Foreign Minister Francisco Fernandez Ordonez said earlier Friday: "We should guarantee Saddam Hussein that if he withdraws from Kuwait he won't be attacked."

"But the content of the (EC-Iraq) dialogue must be to convince Saddam Hussein that there can be no peace unless he withdraws from Kuwait," he told reporters.

If Iraq refuses the U.S. proposal, "we have a really new situation," said Belgian Foreign Minister Mark Eyskens.

On Dec. 18, the EC had said it would meet with Aziz only after he had seen Bush. But American efforts for direct talks with Iraq had bogged down in a dispute over meeting dates.

Poos earlier said any EC meeting with Iraq would not include full-blown negotiations. It would centre on driving home the point that Iraq must leave Kuwait as a precondition to further developments.

Zaid Haider, Iraq's ambassador to Belgium and the EC, told reporters that if Poos "only wants to explain the U.N. resolutions and to pressure us, he might as well stay home."

De Marco

(Continued from page 1)

camps. Local Palestinian reporters were able to monitor his activities, however.

The army took the same step Thursday at camps he visited in the Gaza Strip.

De Marco, the first U.N. General Assembly leader to visit

the Israeli-occupied territories, raised the idea of an initial step in the peace process. Israel opposes such a meeting.

"Let's start with an international conference," de Marco said. "We want to avoid further suffering for the people of this region... the people of Palestine and the people of Israel both have to learn how to live side by side."

De Marco, who also is foreign minister of Malta, began Friday in a meeting in Jerusalem with leaders of Palestinian women's groups.

De Marco was met by three children holding olive branches and signs as he went to meet with 11 women activists at the headquarters of the U.N. Relief and Works Agency, which aids Palestinian refugees.

One of the signs said: "I demand from the United Nations a flag, an identity, a Palestinian state and peace."

Following is the Security Council statement on violence in Gaza issued Friday:

The members of the Security Council are deeply concerned about recent acts of violence in Gaza, especially actions by Israeli security forces against Palestinians, which led to scores of casualties among those civilians.

The members of the council deplore those actions, particularly the shooting of civilians. They reaffirm the applicability of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 to all the Palestinian territories occupied by Israel since 1967, including Jerusalem, and request that Israel, the occupying power, fully comply with the provisions of the convention.

The members of the council reaffirm their positions, most recently expressed in Security Council Resolution 681 (1990), and support the work of the secretary-general in implementing the said resolution. They further urge intensified efforts by all who can contribute to reducing conflict and tension in order to achieve peace in the area.

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Arab meeting

(Continued from page 1)

last moment, it could spare the world a devastating catastrophe... Iraq always surprises us with unexpected decisions," he said.

The four leaders, representing both sides of the Arab divide over the crisis, issued no statement after the talks.

Sudan and Libya have condemned Iraq but have also rejected the military buildup in the Gulf.

JANA said the summit was a success.

"The discussions were profound and serious, marked by a spirit of historical responsibility. It concentrated on the results of the Kuwait crisis, its effect on the Arab reality and how to deal with it," the agency added.

Syria accused Iraq of blocking a peaceful settlement and said the four leaders discussed a joint effort to prevent war.

The official daily Al Baath, newspaper of Syria's ruling Baath Party, said Arabs were still capable of preserving their security despite Iraq's position.

"The (Mistat) summit is not only necessary to underline the weaknesses in the Arab situation but to prevent the dragging of a whole nation to fire," it said.

By Saeda Kilani
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Statistics indicate that there have been 3,580 cases of child abuse in a period of five years in Jordan. The truth may depict a worse situation simply because either our laws do not allow the problem to be totally uncovered or because the victims themselves choose to hide their traumatic experiences.

Criminologists and psychiatrists maintain that social criticism, family structures and familial relations have hampered the emergence of these problems in turn preventing the interested authorities from obtaining precise figures.

One of the biggest problems children in Jordan face is that of sexual abuse. One of these cases is that of a 17 year old girl, Aysheh I., who had a nervous breakdown, and was consequently admitted to several hospitals but without anyone tracing the roots of her state.

However, Aysheh was sexually abused by her father at the age of 13 and by her older brother later. She only revealed her problem to a psychiatrist. The father and the brother, abused the child whenever they have the chance in the absence of other family members. The mother, who knew what was happening remained silent. The silence maintained by mother and daughter encouraged the father to do the same thing with his younger daughter, aged 12.

"In the cases of incest, the father starts flirting with his child, usually following his moves with presents and sweets," says Dr. Waleed Sarhan, a leading psychiatrist. "Within a certain period of time, the girl is trapped where she can't leave or protest. If she tries to get away the father becomes aggressive or he turns to her sister if he fails."

Sarhan attributes this kind of behaviour, from the father or male members of the family, to disorders in their personalities, resulting from their inability to achieve personal satisfaction or because they suffer from severe psychological disturbances.

"The most dangerous of all abuses of children is incest," says Sarhan. "The child, however, does not realize the effects until later when the victim suffers from abdominal pains at around the age of 15." The subsequent psychological effects, according to Dr. Sarhan, are generally evident in the child's behaviour towards others. The child lacks confidence and does not trust anybody. The victim may also suffer from depression, excessive fear and considers suicide.

Many cases of sexual abuse remain hidden even from the

eyes of psychiatrists. Sarhan points out that the discovery of such cases depends on the relationship between the molester and the child. If the former was a stranger, then the child would immediately report what happened to his family. But if it was a member of the family, then many years would pass before the child discloses the incident.

A study which was carried out in the United States in 1979 revealed that 25 per cent of females have been exposed to sexual abuse before they reach age of 13.

The study pointed out that the motives behind sexual exploitation are generally attributed to the aggressor's feelings of disappointment and inability to deal with women.

In Jordan, statistics indicate that 565 moral crimes have been committed against individuals less than 19 years, 166 of these cases are against children less than 10 years. Statistics compiled by Hind Kholoqi, a researcher in this field, show that 641 cases of sexual abuse, which were discovered, took place in Jordan in the period between 1983 and 1988. "Contrary to sexual abuse of males, abuse of females is usually committed in our society by a member of the family," Kholoqi said. "This may be due to our society's edicts on the girl to stay at home."

While sexual abuses occur in different social milieux, they seem to be more distinguished in the poorer areas, where statistics compiled by Dr. Sabri Rubehat, a criminologist and a researcher, reveal that 61 per cent of the assaults were carried out in impoverished areas or in refugee camps, while 27 per cent occurred in rural areas and 9.2 per cent in more prosperous suburbs.

Dr. Rubehat attributes his results to the areas' special demographic and environmental characteristics. These heavily populated areas are generally agglomerated and most of the families are so large are living in small spaces prompting the children to resort to the streets.

"The presence of these children in the street, without any sort of guidance or supervision, makes them an 'easy victim'," he says.

Researchers say that "the responsibility for sexual assaults on children falls on the society's different institutions. Such acts are only a reflection of the failure of these institutions to look after children, by preparing them and organising their personal relations."

"The society has failed in shaping the aggressor's personality," Dr. Rubehat says. "The family has also failed in its methods of bringing up children,

side.

"The bus driver got off the bus, shouted 'Allah Akbar'. He had an iron bar in his hand. The (Israeli) driver ran towards Erez to call for help, and heard shots. What we understand is that reserve soldiers who came from the north shot the assailant and he was killed," a police spokesman said.

Israeli troops swooped on a hilltop village in the occupied West Bank Thursday and seized a Palestinian they had been hunting for two years, relatives said.

The abused future

in supervising and protecting them as well as preparing them to confront different problems in life. Also, the absence of any institution that may prevent such acts from taking place is an indicator of defects in the guidance system."

According to Rubehat's research, which was carried out on cases which occurred in the period between January 1986 and July 1988, 39.6 of the assailants were students, while labourers constituted 20.6 per cent. And while most of the assaults (85.7 per cent) were committed by Jordanians, the research reveals that Egyptians, who make up only 6 per cent of the population in Jordan, committed 11.5 per cent of the sexual assaults on children.

The most dangerous child abuse is physical abuse. Parents beat their children constantly and sometimes so hard that they (the children) are taken to hospital for treatment. Being afraid of the consequences, the parents sometimes hide their children's injuries and fractures leaving them to heal by themselves.

"Related stories of physical abuse are the most spread-out in the country and frequently the parents invent stories of their children falling from stairs or something similar," remarks Sarhan. "And because of the absence of any law that protect the child's interests, some parents think they have the full right to treat the child (any) way they see suitable."

A man was beating his child (severely) in one of the streets in downtown Amman but nobody cared or dared to stop him. Whispers from the surrounding spectators blamed the child for his 'atrocious' behaviour of spilling down four packages of fruits

and vegetables while talking with a schoolmate he encountered in the street. On the other side of the street was a policeman who did not even try to intervene or stop the beating. When the father was questioned why he is beating the child so harshly, he responded: "He is my son and I do not allow you to interfere in our family affairs."

Sociologists attribute this kind of treatment to the parents' personalities as well as to those of children. Parents' ignorance of the correct child-raising method is also an essential point. "Some people who beat their children think it is the best way to raise them," points out Dr. Rubehat. "It is seen by many parents as discipline."

Another case was reported to one of the hospitals of Amman was of a three year old child who suffered from bruises all over her body. The young child was crying constantly so the mother "lost her patience" and spilled hot water on her. Impatience has also driven another to stick needles in her two year old baby who was suffering from fever.

"The child who is victim of physical abuse is also victim of the parents' inability to deal with the child," explains Rubehat. "Some parents think that the beating may decrease their anger, but it is not beneficial to the child. On the contrary, it may teach him/her to resort to violence when facing problems."

Some of these injuries, according to psychiatrists could lead to disfigurement, physical and psychological harm, but it may also lead to death. "Insufficient information and research that would reveal the real motives behind all crimes committed make it difficult to find out

the precise number of children who died as a result of physical abuses," Dr. Sarhan says.

The number of crimes committed in the kingdom during 1986 were reported to be 66 cases in which 69 people were killed, 12 of whom were under 18 years of age.

Dr. Rubehat points out, in his research on child abuse, that 2622 children were exposed to severe physical abuse between the year 1986 and July 1988. "One must consider that these figures are only official ones," he said, "uncovered victims of physical abuse remain much more and they are still hidden from the public."

Children's suffering extend to that of sexual and physical exploitation. The negligence and indifference of the parents to severe psychological consequences about which the parents know nothing.

Child neglect takes several forms of which the most important is that of medical care. Parents tend to deny or overlook the existence of any serious illness suffered by their children and refuse to provide medical treatment for them. This is manifested by their indifference if the child suffers from weakness in his vision, or having high temperature, etc. The most common in our countries, according to Dr. Sarhan, is the parents' flouting of the doctor's instructions.

One of the cases which was reported to a psychiatrist is that of a ten year old child who appeared to be totally deaf, crippled, and dumb. The child, however, could only utter a couple of words, "divorce me". Upon investigating this case, the psychiatrist found out that

these children are at risk," Sarhan said.

"The United States has gone too far, its laws made it too hard to bring children up," Sarhan said. He explained that a new law in Jordan would give a certain body or authority the legal right to interfere when they feel there is an actual case against the child.

In Jordan the first effort came with the formulation of the national committee in 1988. "This committee was founded in order to study and suggest a policy to deal with this problem (street children)," Sabri Rubehat said. He added that his committee had set up a draft to tackle the problem in cooperation with the General Union of Voluntary Societies (GUVS) but the draft was never adopted. "It was supposed to be launched in April 1989 but due to some internal problems in the Kingdom it was never launched," Rubehat said.

On the pan-Arab level Rubehat explained that in cooperation with the higher Arab Council for Children based in Cairo another draft was drawn to tackle this problem in all Arab countries. "Unfortunately this also failed because of the recent Gulf crisis," Rubehat added.

"The only way to deal with this problem is to formulate a unified view to all social problems including this one," Rubehat said.

Dr. Sarhan said that these kids are a product of broken families, or families with multiple marriages, low socio-economic standards and poor upbringing.

"Sometimes these children are pushed to work in the streets by an adult for example a step mother, or a bossy father, or even an older brother or sister," Sarhan said. He also added that the adult usually masterminds the child's actions and tells him or her what to do, and what to say. "Sometimes they make the child wear skimpy clothes when it's cold so that the child looks as poor as possible," he added.

"What we should do is find ways and alternatives to keep these kids off the streets," Sarhan said adding that this kind of alternative would help these kids in forming futures and in stabilising their lives. "We should also enact laws in our legislation that protect the children from the family, when

hard, but they don't make as much money as we do on the streets," another child said.

"The society ignores the problem of street children because the belief is that by ignoring the problem it will simply disappear," Sabri Rubehat, a sociologist and criminologist at the Public Security Department (PSD) told the Jordan Times.

He said that these children who live on the streets make a living out of begging and doing other petty jobs are driven away from a normal and stable family life. "These children don't have a healthy environment. Most of them come from broken families, with no education, and no stability in their lives," he added.

"Most of these kids prefer to live on the streets than to have a stable job," Dr. Waleed Sarhan, a psychiatrist said. He added that the reason most of those kids end up going back to their street lives is because they are not offered better alternatives. "When these kids live on the streets and make enough money there without having to work for it the idea of having a job just does not suit them," he said.

"This of course does not mean all children are like this but it is rare to find a healthy child between them," Sarhan said.

"We have to raise the public awareness about these children because when a person pays a

kid, he does it to relieve a guilt feeling he has, and ends up reinforcing what the kid is doing," Sarhan said. "For example I know a 15 year old kid who makes money off the streets, by the end of the day he drinks three araqs, smokes two packets of cigarettes and takes one box of volume," Sarhan said. "This is an example of kids who turn into delinquent adolescents and who become a burden on the society," Sarhan added.

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12-year-old Chinese wins first world swimming crown

PERTH, Australia (AP) — Fu Mingxia became water's youngest world champion Friday.

The 12-year-old from China, who was kicked out of a school gymnastics programme at age 8 because she was getting too old, spun past much older, more experienced opponents to win the women's platform title at the World Swimming Championships.

Elena Miroshina of the Soviet Union won a tight battle for second place with a spectacular final dive, while American Wendy Williams took third Olympic champion Xu Yanmei faltered in the late rounds.

Fu finished with 426.51 points to 402.87 Miroshina and 400.23 for Williams. Xu finished fourth with 399.12.

Fu, the platform champ at last summer's Goodwill Games, was the youngest entrant in any event in the 19-year history of this meet and thus the youngest world champion.

That's an honour she's guaranteed to retain for a long time. The world body of aquatic sport, FINA, voted this week to place a 14-year-old age limit on future Olympics world championships and World Cup meets. Fu will be all right for the 1992 Olympics because of a loophole in the new rule, but for the time being her foes can breathe easy.

"She would be a phenomenal diver no matter how old she was," Williams said.

Fu was the first champion crowned at the meet, which also featured the start of men's diving and women's water polo on its

second day. Edwin Jongsma of the Netherlands, an outsider who finished eighth in the 3-metre at the 1988 Olympics, topped the preliminaries for Saturday's final with 573.78 points. Chinese divers were second and third — Wang Yijie at 571.11 and Tan Liangde at 563.34.

America's Mark Lenzi was fourth with 555.90 points despite competing with tendinitis of the left ankle that hurt every time he bounced on the board.

"I'm going to go home and put ice on it," Lenzi said. "I'm used to dealing with pain and I'll put it out of my mind tomorrow."

Mark Bradshaw, the "U.S. Diver of the Year," was sixth at 543.81. He said that the judges were marking tightly on the big field of 33 competitors but was pleased to qualify. The top 12 in prelims advance.

"The whole idea of preliminaries is to get into the final," Bradshaw said. "Tomorrow, I'm going to do the same things with a little more emphasis on sharper entries."

Canada, behind four goals from sisters Marie-Claude and Pascale Desjardes, beat France in the water polo opener. New Zealand played Germany and the United States met Australia later.

Two American sisters Karen and Sarah Josephson, took the lead after preliminaries in duet synchronised swimming, getting three perfect 10's and edging the Japanese pair of Mikako Kotani and Aki Takayama 98.96-98.40.

"It was a great swim and we felt good about our performance,"

Karen said. Her sister added: "It was easier than in practice. It was exciting to swim for an audience."

Canada's Kathy Glen and Lisa Alexander were third in the preliminaries, which are combined with Sunday's figures to determine the eight finalists.

Fu stands 148 centimetres tall and her listed weight of 41 kilograms (90 pounds) seems an exaggeration. But when she hurls her tiny body off the 10-metre platform and aims for the whirling hullet headed straight for the target.

She hit the hulleys time and time again in the final.

Fu was second to Xu in Thursday's preliminary and said she did not expect to come out on top.

"I was not even thinking about getting a medal," she said. "I was just concentrating on thinking about the next dive."

Her round of eight dives not spectacular — her highest individual mark any judge was a lone 8.5 on her third dive — but she avoided the low scores that bedeviled Williams at the beginning and led to Xu's downfall at the end.

She was second, right on Xu's tail, through the fifth round before the teammates produced widely different results from the same dive in the sixth, a forward 3-1-2 somersault from the pike position.

Fu, diving first, spun through the routine so tight and swiftly that it almost seemed she had time for a fourth tumble before

hitting the water and won her highest total thus far, 65.70 points.

Xu, next, had struggled on the previous round and now came unglued, managing a string of 5's and 6's for a 52.20, her lowest mark in the late rounds where the more difficult dives are made.

The kid was ahead to stay. "I'm getting used to competing against girls this age," said 23-year-old Williams. "I've been to China and they have an incredible programme for the kids."

Miroshina took second with the day's best dive, a backward 1-2-2 somersault with 3-1-2 twists in the last round that woo the lone "9" of the session. Williams needed a top performance to take a medal and — while her inward 2-1-2 somersault produced her best scores of the day — it left her behind the Soviet champion with the Chinese pair still to go.

"I felt really bad," Williams said. "But my coach came over and told me, 'wait until the Chinese dive.' Now, I feel great."

Xu missed the bronze by 1.11 points when her backward 2-1-2 somersault came up short. It gave Williams a world championship bronze to go with her bronze from the 1988 Olympics, which was won in very similar circumstances when Angela Stassiulevitch of the Soviet Union just missed on her last attempt.

"It was so much like Seoul," Williams said. "Xu usually drills that dive for 9's."

Unseeded Japanese reaches Brisbane semifinals

BRISBANE, Australia (R) — Aki Kijimuta became the first Japanese player to reach the semifinals of the Australian Women's Hardcourt Tennis Championships after upsetting Australia's best hope, Rachel McQuillan, Friday.

Unseeded Kijimuta took two

hours 21 minutes to beat 19-year-old McQuillan 6-2 6-7 (4-7) 6-3.

"This week I've been very relaxed," said 22-year-old Kijimuta. "I always felt in control in today's match."

Kijimuta, ranked 115 in the world, also beat former world

number three Pam Shriver of the United States and tournament third seed Austrian Barbara Paulus on her way to Saturday's semifinals.

She is the first Japanese player to reach the semifinals in the nine-year history of the hardcourt tournament.

"I think it's good for Japanese tennis," Kijimuta said. "If I play good, other Japanese players think 'if she can do that, maybe I can do it too.'"

Ninth seed McQuillan, who allowed Kijimuta to rush to a 5-1 lead in the first set, said she was disappointed with her form.

"I didn't serve very well," said the world's 39th-ranked player. "My forehand let me down and that's usually my best shot."

McQuillan said Kijimuta's solid double-handed forehand and backhand groundstrokes kept her pinned to the baseline. "I tried to come in but it was hard because she kept the ball so deep."

Czechoslovak Helena Sukova, former two-time winner of the tournament, took just 58 minutes to end the hopes of former world junior number one, unseeded Cristina Tassi of Argentina.

Number two seed Sukova won 6-2 6-1 to go through to the semifinal.

Sukova was the only seed to make it through to the last four.

Fifth seed Sabine Appelmans of Belgium went down 6-4 2-6 6-4 to Soviet Larisa Savchenko — who beat top seed Jana Novotna on Thursday — and American Linda Harvey-Wild routed fourth seed Judith Wiesner of Austria.

Harvey-Wild, 19, beat Wiesner 6-1 6-4 to march into her first semifinal on the women's tour. "God gave me certain abilities and I'm starting to use them now," she said.

"I've got a lot more shots than most girls and I think my game's just taken longer than other people to come together."

Harvey-Wild, who beat Spain's Arantxa Sanchez Vicario, one of the world's leading players, in her first tournament as a professional in Chicago last year, now plays Sukova.

Six weeks after they acrimoniously broke up the most successful partnership in women's tennis, Helena Sukova and Jana Novotna are still feuding.

SPORTS IN BRIEF

Agassi to play at Wimbledon

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Andre Agassi says he'll play at Wimbledon next summer, but he isn't promising to tone down completely his colourful tennis tings. In an interview on the television sports network ESPN, the flashy tennis star responded to questions that he might never play again at Wimbledon because of the tournament's dress code. The rules require players to wear conservative clothing, with white the dominant colour. "I think you'll see me there this year and I hope people are ready for it," he said Wednesday. Agassi, 20, is ranked no. 4 in the world. The flamboyant, long-haired native of Las Vegas is known for his fluorescent tennis outfits.

Fromberg reaches BP semifinals

WELLINGTON (AP) — Third-seeded Richard Fromberg of Australia overcame an early lapse to defeat Ramesh Krishnan of India 5-7, 6-4, 7-5 Friday to advance to the semifinals of the \$175,000 BP Nationals Tennis Tournament. Fromberg will play Christian Bergstrom of Sweden in Saturday's semifinals of the opening event of the 1991 IMB-Association of Tennis Professionals Tour. Unseeded Bergstrom advanced with a 6-2, 7-6 (7-1) win over qualifier Dimitri Poliakov of the Soviet Union in the other quarterfinal Friday. Omar Camporese of Italy, the no. 6 seed, and unseeded Lars Jonsson of Sweden will play in the other semifinal Saturday, having advanced with quarterfinal wins Thursday. The lanky Fromberg, a member of the Australian Davis Cup team, took two and a half hours to subdue the experienced Krishnan. "He's very difficult to play," the Australian said. "You can't hit a bad shot and if you hit short he's straight into the net." Krishnan said he felt the match could have gone either way. "It was a photo finish," he said. "When it finishes that close it can always go either way. Any time you lose you're disappointed but I was still pretty happy with the way I played."

McEnroe drops out of NSW Open

SYDNEY (AP) — American John McEnroe has withdrawn from next week's New South Wales Open Tennis Tournament due to a back injury, a tournament spokesman said Friday. McEnroe hurt his left shoulder while practicing near his Los Angeles home, his agent said. The 31-year-old left-hander was planning to use the New South Wales Open at Sydney's White City courts as a tuneup for the Australian Open beginning Jan. 14 in Melbourne. His status for the year's first Grand Slam tournament is not clear. Tennis Australia officials said Friday. Organisers of the 64-player New South Wales Open said they were still waiting for a decision from German Boris Becker, who has been offered a wild card for the tournament that begins Monday. Becker is also considering an offer to play in an exhibition tournament at Adelaide.

Milla voted player of the year

PARIS (R) — Roger Milla, Cameroon's veteran World Cup star with the magic touch and the giggling hips, was voted African footballer of the year in a Soccer Writers' Poll. It was announced Wednesday. The 33-year-old Milla, who came out of retirement to provide some of the most memorable moments of the World Cup finals in Italy, took the award for the second time, no less than 14 years after first claiming it. Milla, scorer of four goals as Cameroon became the first African nation to advance to the World Cup quarter-finals, received 103 votes in the joint poll by the magazines France Football and Afrique Football. Second was Algerian midfielder Cherif El Ouazani with 64 votes and joint third were forward Rabah Madjer, also of African champions Algeria, and Cameroon striker Francois Omam-Biyik, scorer of the goal which beat defending champions Argentina in the opening match of the World Cup, both with 60.

WBC names Chavez boxer of the year

MEXICO CITY (R) — The World Boxing Council (WBC) has heaped double honours on its super-lightweight champion Julio Cesar Chavez by naming him "Boxer of the Year" for the second successive year and winner of 1990's of best overall fight. The WBC crowned Chavez as the year's top performer for his two successful title defenses that extended his record of unbroken victories to 72. His defence against American challenger Meldrick Taylor in Las Vegas in March was classified as fight of the year after Chavez pounded his opponent to the floor in the 12th round, a WBC statement said. "It was a sensational victory. The fight was very close for 12 rounds and Chavez knocked Taylor out in the very last seconds," WBC President Jose Sulaiman told Reuters in a telephone interview. The 28-year-old Chavez, widely considered the best boxer in the world pound-for-pound, also won the WBC "Boxer of the Year" award in 1989.

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR SATURDAY JANUARY 5, 1991

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

GENERAL TENDENCIES: Distinguish between the real and the unreal, the solid and the secure, the light and the frivolous, the spiritual and the temporal if you expect to utilize tonight's good aspects.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) What you want the most and that takes something to mature can now be yours if you let usual allies know just what you have in mind and get help.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) Keep your attention focused upon those material but private yearnings that are yours and you find that you are able to get some good will.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) You are wide awake and filled with the desire to be with some proven friends and to gain the goodwill of those who are socially experienced.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) Your mind is quickly thinking out the means by which you can get some expert to confidentially release his-know-how to your benefit.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) You now are able to get together with those you like the most to get a new and fresh awareness what is necessary to please them and show your talent.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Whatever you have in mind that requires some contact with an executive can bring you the answers and the benefits you wish flowing to you easily.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) You are so filled with all kinds of interesting ideas that you can well discuss them with experts and get them to go along with what is important.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) You now find that most everyone expects you to carry through with what you have agreed to do and in doing so you get lasting respect from them.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Making a fresh new start to get the goodwill and active assistance of associates in the ventures that mean the most to you can produce results.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) Show that you have ability to carry through with that plan that you scheduled sometime ago and that means your work is thought interesting.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) What a time you can have today and tonight so take the wraps off delaying activity of a pleasant nature and thoroughly enjoy yourself.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) You have some very basic things to do that can bring you the goodwill of your own household if you put them into motion with your own sense of humor.

THE BETTER HALF.

By Harris



Kasparov donates trophy to homeless Armenians

LYON, France (Agencies) — World Chess Champion Garry Kasparov has announced he would donate his chess trophy — worth about \$1 million — to a charity helping homeless Armenians.

"Feeling the responsibility of being one of them I believe that this symbol of my victory should help them (Armenians). That is why I have decided this trophy in the nearest future will be sold at a charity auction and all the money will be distributed among those people," Kasparov said to a standing ovation at the award ceremony at Lyon's Palais De Congress.

At the closing ceremonies, Kasparov, 27, received the trophy studded with 1,018 diamonds and a check for \$1.7 million.

Challenger Anatoly Karpov, 39, received \$1.3 for his losing

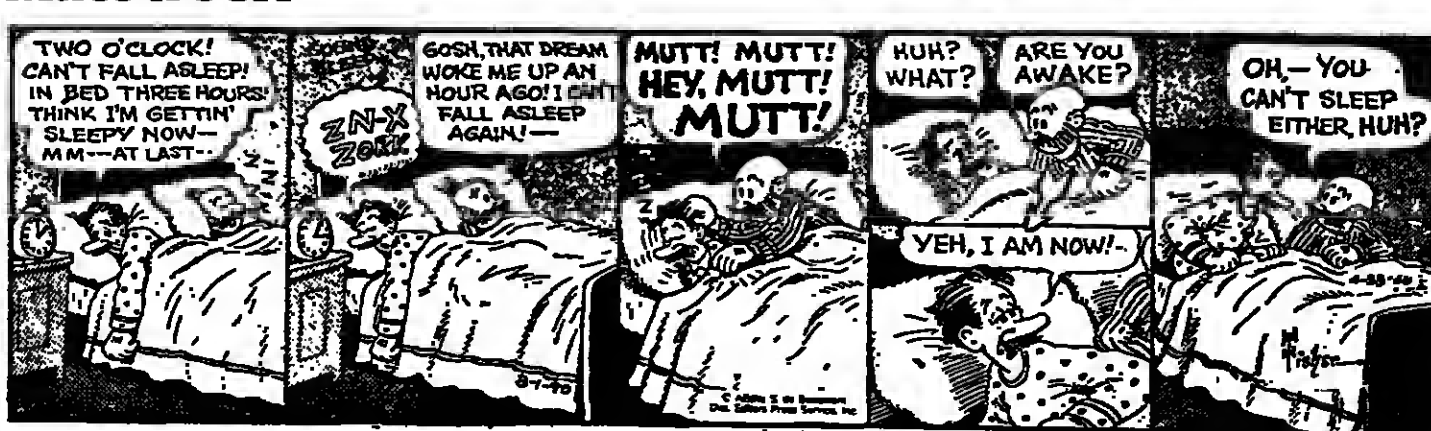
effort. "I woo the world championship in the final minutes of the year," Kasparov said Wednesday, adding that he had not forgotten "that the year started with a tragedy."

He referred to the thousands of minority Armenians who fled Baku, his birthplace on the Caspian Sea, during violent ethnic clashes with Azerbaijanis.

He was draped with the winner's medal and declared champion for the next three years. In a brief news conference after the ceremony, Kasparov said he planned to return to the United States to promote chess.

Karpov said he would go to Moscow for meetings with his groups, Aid For Chernobyl and the Soviet Peace Fund, before moving on to another tournament in Italy.

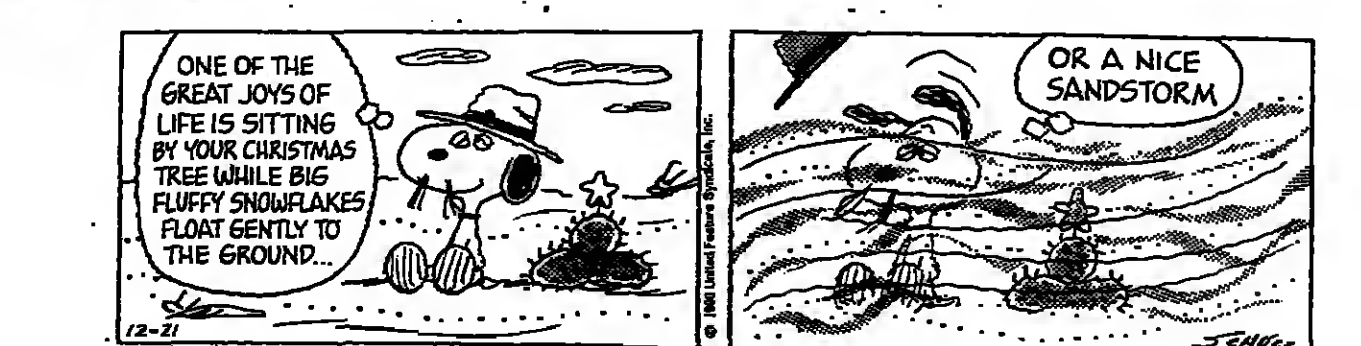
Mutt'n'Jeff



Andy Capp



Peanuts



GOREN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR SHARIF & TANNAN HIRSCH
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ANSWERS TO WEEKLY BRIDGE QUIZ

Q.1—East-West vulnerable, as South you hold:
♠ 7 ♠ 542 ♠ A10 ♠ A986542
As dealer, what action do you take?

A.—You have too much defense and not enough offense to consider a three-level preempt. Change the ace of diamonds to the king of clubs, and the hand would be perfect for a no-vulnerable three-club opening. Pass. You can always get into the act later.

Q.2—East-West vulnerable, as South you hold:
♠ 7 ♠ 542 ♠ A10 ♠ A986542
The bidding has proceeded:
South West North East
Pass Pass 1 ♠ Pass
Pass Pass 1 ♠ Pass

What action do you take?
A.—With two aces and a seven-card suit, as a passed hand you have too much playing strength to respond one no trump. Bid two clubs to see how the auction develops.

Q.3—East-West vulnerable, as South you hold:
♠ 7 ♠ 542 ♠ A10 ♠ A986542
The bidding has proceeded:
South West North East
Pass Pass 1 ♠ Pass
2 ♠ Pass 2 ♠ Pass

What action do you take?
A.—Your hand is suitable for play in clubs, and nothing else. Clue partner to on your seven-card suit by rebidding three clubs.

Q.4—Both vulnerable, as South you hold:

♠ K9 ♠ Q10943 ♠ J52 ♠ 108
Partner opens the bidding with one heart. What do you respond?

A.—There are those who believe that any time you have five-card support for partner's major, and a limited hand, you should leap to game. Include us out. We insist on a singleton somewhere. This hand is too balanced for a jump to game, so we would settle for a raise to two hearts.

Q.5—Both vulnerable, as South you hold:
♠ Void ♠ K43 ♠ K07 ♠ KQJ964
The bidding has proceeded:
West North East South
1 ♠ Pass 2 ♠ ?

What action do you take?
A.—Normally, when the opponents have bid one major and you hold the other, you should enter the auction with a takeout double if you are strong enough to compete. Here, however, there is too great a disparity in the suits. We would opt for a three-club overall.

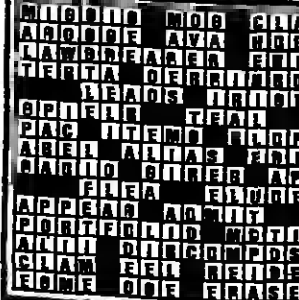
Q.6—Neither vulnerable, as South you hold:
♠ A952 ♠ AJ ♠ KQ63 ♠ K43
The bidding has proceeded:
South West North East
1 NT 2 ♠ Pass Pass

What action do you take?
A.—A very close decision. We would not blame you if you passed. However, our four-card holding in the other major prompts us to double. In the pass-out seat, under the overcaller, that action is primarily for takeout.

THE Daily Crossword by Virginia L. Yates



Yesterday's Puzzle Solved:



ASEAN draws oil plan in event of war in Gulf

MANILA (R) — Oil-producing countries in South East Asia have renewed their pledge to supply non-producing ASEAN members if war breaks out in the Gulf, a Philippine oil official said Friday.

Oil producers in the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) reaffirmed their commitment to supply the oil needs of their partners which traditionally depend on the Middle East, Philippine National Oil Co. Vice-President Orlando Galang said.

"We reviewed the procedures and the formula for determining how much will be contributed to the pool and how this will be distributed... we determined it is workable," he told reporters after a two-day meeting in Manila.

ASEAN has an emergency petroleum sharing arrangement under which a member state suffering a severe shortage can tap its partners for supplies.

Representatives from national oil companies in the six-member ASEAN met to determine how much oil Malaysia, Brunei and Indonesia, all oil producers, can share with Singapore, Thailand and the Philippines.

Galang said they assumed the worst-case scenario, that of a total supply cut-off from the Gulf. He declined to disclose volumes and specific allocations,

saying the results would be presented to ASEAN economic ministers for approval.

Galang said the participants thought that if war broke out some countries, such as Iran, might not be involved.

"But even if Iran continued to produce, insurance rates might be too high and tankers may be too afraid to go into the Gulf to pick it up," he said.

"So the worst-case scenario is that nothing will be coming out of the Gulf," he noted.

ASEAN's non-oil producers import most of their requirements from the Middle East. Even Malaysia and Indonesia buy finished products from the Gulf, Galang said.

Aquino seeks emergency powers

MANILA (R) — President Corason Aquino said Thursday she wanted emergency powers for six months to cope with the impact on the Philippines of a possible war in the Gulf.

She said she was asking congress to approve legislation granting her emergency powers to take over public utilities and businesses, suspend labour laws and control supplies of oil, food and other essential commodities.

Aquino said the proposed powers would include penal sanctions against violators.

"In short, these are powers to respond to the crisis as the public welfare may require," she said in a press statement.

The Philippines, which imports almost all its oil, is among the Third World countries affected by the Gulf crisis.

Speaker of congress Ramon Mitra, said in a radio interview that it may not be necessary to pass special legislation, as the present constitution already gave the president inherent emergency powers, such as the right to ration food supplies.

But government officials said Aquino wanted the powers clearly spelled out.

Aquino's executive secretary, Oscar Orbes, said Wednesday that Aquino wanted the emergency powers approved before the Jan. 15 United Nations deadline for Iraqi troops to withdraw from Kuwait.

Defence secretary, Fidel Ramos, warned that should war break out the Philippines might have to contend with domestic unrest as extremist groups tried to exploit an inevitable rise in prices and shortages of certain commodities.

Ramos said it could also trigger a foreign exchange shortage in the Philippines.

Gulf crisis costs Saudis twice as much as windfall from oil

DHAHRAN, Saudi Arabia (AP) — A Saudi official denied U.S. claims that the kingdom is reaping massive oil profits and said it is spending twice as much as its oil windfall on the Gulf crisis.

The official, who is knowledgeable about the oil industry, said claims by some members of the U.S. Congress that Saudi Arabia has pocketed over \$10 billion profit from increased oil prices and production "are nonsense and don't reflect reality."

Last week, the Democratic leader of the House of Representatives, said Saudi Arabia would pick up 43 billion in extra revenue over 12 months because of the surge in oil prices after the Iraqi invasion.

"They literally could pay for Desert Shield themselves," he said.

During a visit to Saudi Arabia this week, U.S. Vice President Dan Quayle asked King Fahd and the toppled emir of Kuwait for more money to help support the extended stay of U.S. forces in the Gulf. Senior U.S. administration officials indicated both reacted positively.

The 1991 cost of the U.S. military operation in the Gulf has been estimated at \$30 billion. But it appears unlikely the Saudis will significantly expand their contribution beyond picking up the costs for food, fuel, transportation and lodging for the new forces.

Information Minister Ali Al Sbaer said Monday that Saudi expenditures due to the Gulf crisis were "much more than the increase in petroleum revenues" but gave no details.

The Saudi official speaking on condition he was not identified said that since Aug. 2 the kingdom has earned an additional \$14 billion in oil revenues.

"But we've spent more than twice that amount as a result of the current crisis," the official said, and costs are expected to rise as the troop build-up continues.

Knowledgeable sources said Saudi Arabia has spent \$6 billion to support the 28-nation multinational force including 325,000 U.S. troops. That works out to \$1.2 billion a month, a figure which is expected to rise as the U.S. deployment moves to 420,000 troops in the next few weeks.

The Saudis have paid about \$4 billion to nations hurt by the U.N. embargo against Iraq who have sent troops to help defend the kingdom, the source said.

The government is spending about \$2 billion to house, feed and clothe 350,000 Kuwaiti refugees for six months, the source said.

Domestically, it spent \$1.5 billion to gear up the Saudi military, \$2 billion for civil defence, \$2.2 billion for an arms package in September and \$7.8 billion for an additional arms package in October, the source said.

The Saudis also spent \$1.5 billion to gear up oil production from 5.4 million barrels a day, when the crisis began, to eight million barrels a day reached only in December, the source said.

That adds up to \$27 billion in Saudi expenditures until Jan. 1, plus the cancellation of \$4 billion in debts owed by Egypt, the source said.

"The Gulf crisis has been tremendously costly for Saudi Arabia and we will continue to pay for it long after," the Saudi official said.

"Any charges that Saudi Arabia is making a windfall are totally unfounded. Any charges that Saudi Arabia has not

assumed its burden are untrue," he said.

During the past five months, Saudi Arabia produced an average of between 7-7.2 million barrels daily, at an average price of \$28-\$30, sources said. The Saudis earn about \$3 less than the price quoted on the New York Exchange.

The U.S. congressman appeared to have his \$13 billion figure on Saudi oil production of eight million barrels daily and oil prices at around \$28 a barrel. These were compared with the pre-crisis 5.4 million barrels a day and prices below \$18 a barrel and projected for 12 months.

But the Saudi government announced Monday it was delaying putting into effect its 1991 budget because the uncertainty created by the crisis has made it difficult to project how much revenue it will get from oil.

Oil prices are likely to surge, at least temporarily, if there is a war and to fall dramatically if the crisis is resolved peacefully.

Oil industry sources said the Saudis will have to cut oil production after the crisis ends to allow Kuwait and Iraq to start exporting again. This will mean a drop in income.

AMMAN EXCHANGE RATES

Thursday, January 3, 1991
Central Bank official rates

	Buy	Sell		
U.S. dollar	662.0	666.0	Japanese yen (for 100)	496.3
Pound Sterling	1288.0	1295.7	Dutch guilder	394.2
Deutschemark	444.7	447.4	Swedish crown	118.4
Swiss franc	324.6	327.7	Italian lire (for 100)	59.1
French franc	130.6	131.4	Belgian franc (for 10)	214.8

LONDON EXCHANGE RATES

LONDON (R) — Following are the buying and selling rates for leading world currencies and gold against the dollar at mid-session on the London foreign exchange and bullion markets Friday.

One Sterling	1.9465/75	U.S. dollar
One U.S. dollar	1.1510/20	Canadian dollar
	1.4935/40	Deutschemark
	1.6850/60	Dutch guilders
	1.2645/50	Swiss francs
	30.76/81	Belgian francs
	5.0750/0800	French francs
	1123/1124	Italian lire
	133.45/55	Japanese yen
	5.6010/60	Swedish crowns
	5.8450/8500	Norwegian crowns
	5.7420/70	Danish crowns
One ounce of gold	387.65/388.15	U.S. dollars

WORLD STOCK MARKETS

By Reuters

TOKYO — Stocks ended an abbreviated first trading day of 1991 higher. The Nikkei index rose 220.47 points, or 0.92 per cent, to 24,069.18 on buying by big brokerage and arbitrageurs in a sluggish session devoid of many investors.

SYDNEY — Shares closed at a three-year low on mounting concern over the Gulf crisis and the state of the world economy. The All Ordinaries ended 31.5 points lower at 1,241.5.

HONG KONG — Share prices closed sharply higher, bolstered by a U.S. proposal on peace talks with Iraq and gains in Tokyo, but trading remained light. The Hang Seng index gained 41.73 points to close at 3,046.61.

SINGAPORE — The market closed with widespread gains on renewed buying after U.S. President George Bush's offer to hold a meeting with Iraq next week. The Straits Times industrial index rose 15.63 points to 1,180.57.

FRANKFURT — Renewed hopes of averting war in the Gulf boosted the dax index 2.2 per cent to 1,397.07.

ZURICH — The all-share SPI index slipped 1.1 point to 894. A firmer trend in Frankfurt helped a recovery from morning lows.

PARIS — The CAC-40 index gained 8.16 points to 1,547.66.

LONDON — The FTSE index gained 8.3 to 2,126.1 despite worries about the Gulf crisis and the British economy.

NEW YORK — Economic worries and the Gulf crisis kept many investors sidelined. At 1700 GMT the Dow Jones industrials were down 9.4 points to 2,564.11.

Cathay Pacific suspends Bahrain flights

HONG KONG (R) — Hong Kong flag carrier Cathay Pacific Airways said Friday it was suspending its daily flight to London via Bahrain from Jan. 11 until the Gulf crisis was resolved.

Three direct Hong Kong to London flights would be added to the current schedule of five a week, a company statement said. Another service which goes to London by way of Bangkok, Bombay and Dubai four times a week, would not be affected.

"The Bahrain service will be reinstated as soon as the airline is satisfied that the situation in the Middle East justifies this," the statement said.

Peru replaces inti with nuevo sol

LIMA (AP) — Peru Thursday officially introduced its second new currency in six years, lopping six zeros off the inti to create the "nuevo sol."

A law, published Thursday in the official newspaper, requires that all prices and financial records be listed in terms of the new currency. The law was passed in December by congress.

The inti will remain in circulation until after bills and coins representing the nuevo sol are released, the law said. Introduction of the new currency should occur "slowly," the law said.

Central bank director Julio Valverde said Thursday that new bills and coins won't be available until at least June.

The new law means that the U.S. dollar is now worth 0.55 nuevo soles. Wednesday, the dollar bought 550,000 intis.

The law was published only a week after the government announced that as of Jan. 1 prices should be listed in terms of millions of intis.

Banks and businesses began listing prices in millions of intis as early as Tuesday. The measure led to long lines in many stores, as both customers and cashiers adjusted to the new mathematics.

Thursday stores began listing prices in terms of the nuevo sol. The cost of printing new bills and minting new coins may top \$100 million, analysts said. In the past, coins were minted in Peru but bills were printed in Britain, France, Germany, Italy and Mexico.

Congressional sources have said the central bank may try to print the nuevo sol bills in Peru. President Alberto Fujimori, who took office July 28, promised during the presidential campaign that he would launch a new currency.

In August, Fujimori imposed harsh austerity measures to eliminate hyperinflation, then running at more than 60 per cent per month.

Kuwaitis lost \$6b oil cash

NICOSIA (R) — Kuwait has lost nearly \$6 billion in oil revenue since Iraqi troops swept into the emirate in August and oil production halted, Kuwaiti Oil Minister Rashid Salem Al Ameri was quoted as saying.

The Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) quoted him as saying strategic and commercial oil reserves in Western countries would prevent a sharp rise in oil prices in the event of a Gulf war.

Beside the loss of nearly \$6 billion, Ameri said Kuwait's oil installations were extensively damaged by the Iraqis. It was difficult at present to evaluate the damage, he added.

He said Kuwait had recently bought crude oil and oil products from Saudi Arabia in particular and also on the spot market and enable it to supply its network of filling stations and refineries in Europe. He gave no details of quantities.

He said he was signing a \$6.5 million contract with a Hungarian company he did not name involving investments in 17 filling stations, Kuwait's first investment in eastern Europe. He did not say when or where the contract would be signed.

Ameri said the investment in Hungary was partly in support to East European country's condemnation of Iraq over its invasion of Kuwait.

He said Hungary was badly hit by the rise in oil prices caused by the Gulf crisis and a halt in Soviet oil supplies.

The minister said Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC), whose foreign subsidiaries are still operating, was considering oil investments in Thailand and East Asian countries.

He believed Iraq was producing enough oil to cover military and domestic consumption, but said he could not rule out Iraqi oil exports to Jordan.

Indonesia budget targets growth-inflation balance

JAKARTA (R) — Indonesia's policy makers are walking an economic tightrope, pulled by pre-election populism on one side and hard-headed pragmatism on the other.

Beneath them inflation is snapping its jaws. A draft budget due Monday for the 1991/92 fiscal year which begins April 1 will look to spend the country's surging oil revenues without sending prices rocketing, economists say.

But they believe the government will yield to temptation to make people happy before elections due in early 1992 by raising spending in the villages and improving infrastructure.

"Expanding the rural economy is okay if you also improve rural infrastructure. With a better flow of goods the danger of inflation is not so bad," one economist said.

Indonesian inflation was officially 9.53 per cent in 1990 against 5.97 per cent in 1989, and the highest rate since 11.46 per cent in 1983.

"The government will continue efforts to curb the growth rate of inflation at not more than one digit," Finance Minister Johannes Sumarlin said Thursday.

Fuelling inflation has been a booming economy, imports and soaring investment. The economy grew 7.3 per cent in 1989/90 and a 7.0 per cent expansion is estimated for the current 1990/91 year.

Added to this were windfall gains from oil exports after prices recovered at mid-year and then soared above \$30 a barrel following Iraq's invasion of Kuwait. Jakarta has used an

average price of \$16.50 in the current 1990/91 budget.

"A high oil price brings two problems for Indonesia," one economist said. "One, it contributes to economic growth and fuels inflation. Two, it contributes to income the government faces political pressure to spend, and fuels inflation."

As the economy boomed, banks bursting with funds lent money furiously. Demand for goods and services outpaced availability, "which equals high inflation and lots of imports," a banker said.

In August 1990, the most recent figures available, Indonesia's trade surplus had fallen to \$86.3 million from \$491.6 million a year earlier. While non-oil exports rose just 5.8 per cent over the period, total imports jumped by 45 per cent.

"Import growth is inevitable to help with inflationary supply bottlenecks, and because we need capital goods," a private economist said.

With the windfall from oil revenues, Indonesian politicians have talked of paying off part of Jakarta's foreign debt, which at over \$50 billion is the Third World's fifth largest.

"They've certainly been playing up the issue that a large part of the budget is eaten up debt payments. But if imports are high you eat up your dollar

windfall, so you're still short of foreign exchange to pay off debt," a foreign economist said.

The 1990/91 budget was 42,873 billion rupiah (\$24 billion), up 17 per cent on the previous year. Of that, foreign aid was budgeted at contributing 11,289 billion rupiah (\$6.3 billion).

Japan led the lenders in 1990/91 with \$2.31 billion. "Corporate and especially land tax are not used as effectively as they might be," he said.

MAID MISSING

The Filipina maid Narcisa A. Vagas left the house of her employer on Dec. 17, 1990 and has not come back since then.

Anyone who has any information about her or her whereabouts is kindly requested to call Tel. 603394 or the nearest police station. Anyone who has such information and covers up for her will expose himself to legal penalties.

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in
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(Arabic)

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PHILADELPHIA

HER ALIBI

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More refugees flee Communist Albania; Greece calls for help

IGOUMENTSA, Greece (R) — Scores more Albanian refugees fled to Greece from Europe's last Communist state Friday, braving the dangers of the heavily-patrolled border and defying pleas from Greece to stay home.

Greek officials said almost 200 refugees dodged Albanian border guards and sneaked across the frontier in overnight escapes. To flee from Albania, they must tunnel under a four-metre (13-foot) security fence and cross an icy river.

Nearly 6,000 refugees, must with nothing warmer to wear than threadbare jackets or sweaters, have crossed the border on foot since Albanian Communist leader Ramiz Alia loosened his grip on power and promised reforms in early December.

Greek Foreign Minister Antonis Samaras said he would raise problems caused by the large num-

ber of refugees with Greece's European Community (EC) partners in Luxembourg Friday. Samaras is calling on the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in Geneva to send a team to assess the problem and help deal with the influx of thousands of destitute people.

The Greek army erected an overnight tent city in the village of Kalpaki to handle some refugees. Others are spread out in centres around the north-west. The government has repeatedly called on them to go home.

Most of the refugees come from Albania's large ethnic Greek minority. Athens has appealed to them to stay at home and await the pledged political reforms, including free elections in February.

But few of the refugees believe that the reforms will lead to real changes in Europe's poorest country, which only last month

began to shed 45 years of Stalinism and strict isolationist policies. Most scoff at the Greek call for them to go home and believe many others will come across.

"I miss my mother and father," said Orestes Filis, 16, who crossed the border with his sister, Marietta, 21. "But I will never go back. I want to go to school here in Greece."

Most, but not all, of the refugees speak Greek and only a few have any training or job skills.

Odysseus Intis, 32, who crossed with his wife and two young children, said: "I am one of the lucky ones. I worked as a foreman in a state building co-operative. I made about 6,400 drachmas (\$42) a month."

"You can't understand it. The degree of decay. Nothing works. Only top members of the Communist Party have anything

new. Everything else, all the machinery for business, is falling apart," he said. "There is no future for that country, whatever they reform."

Most of the refugees had heard on the radio of the goods available outside their country but many were still stunned by what they saw in northern Greece.

"This is my first car ride," said George Vasiliskoches, 22, who crossed the border two days ago, and was given a ride.

Vasiliskoches is typical of many refugees. He learned Greek from his parents.

But he can barely read or write, has no skill or craft, and his only job experience was two years in the Albanian army.

"I worked on a farm," he said. "But with shovels and hoes, you know, there were no machines of any kind. We did everything by hand."

New fighting shatters holiday lull in S. Africa; 17 killed

JOHANNESBURG (R) — At least 17 people died in black factional fighting as rival groups battled with guns after several days of relative peace during the Christmas and New Year holidays, police said Friday.

Police said 14 black men had been killed in fighting in Natal province over the past 24 hours in one of the worst surges of violence in recent weeks. South Africa had been fairly quiet during the holiday period.

The new violence came as police outlined plans to halt growing crime and violence, including substantial payments for people who hand in guns and explosives.

A police report on the Natal violence said eight men were killed in an attack on a village at Mabaleni — four men were killed when a band with AK-47 assault rifles attacked two villages at Hlan — and two men were killed in fighting with assault rifles at Tshale mountain.

A man and a seven-year-old girl were shot and killed at Tokozo, a black township outside Johannesburg, and a man backed to death near Port Elizabeth on the south coast, police said.

The police report gave few details and did not comment on

reasons for the sudden upsurge in fighting.

More than 1,000 people have died in factional fighting in black townships around Johannesburg since August. More than 5,000 people have died in factional fighting in recent years in Natal.

The fighting mostly pits Xhosa and other blacks loyal to the African National Congress (ANC) against Zulus of the conservative Inkatha Movement. The two groups oppose apartheid, but differ over leadership claims and plans for the future of South Africa.

Johannesburg's black townships were fairly quiet during the holidays because many Zulu migrant workers returned to homes in Natal for the holidays.

Police spokesman Capt. Craig Kotze said police had launched "operation sentry" to seize guns and other weapons in black townships. He said special police teams would track down weapons hidden in illegal caches.

The government has ordered a major crackdown on crime. Police say weapons brought into South Africa by opposition groups increasingly are being used for bank robberies and

other crimes.

Police also said rewards would be paid to people who turn in illegal guns and other weapons. Rewards range from the equivalent of \$2,400 for an AK-47 rifle, \$2,000 for radio-controlled explosives and \$300 for a hand grenade.

The ANC, the country's main black opposition group, criticised the police plans, warning they aimed at suppressing the ANC's military wing. It said ANC military personnel would defend themselves.

"We recognise crime is a major problem facing our country, but to equate action to combat crime with an attack on the ANC is irresponsible," the ANC said in a statement.

President F.W. de Klerk legalised the ANC and other opposition groups last February to clear the way for talks on sharing power with the black majority. Negotiations on a new constitution are expected to begin later this year.

Meanwhile U.S. President George Bush is likely to ask the United States congress this year to modify sanctions imposed on South Africa for its apartheid policies, a U.S. government official said Thursday.

Colombia announces 1st major drug bust of 1991

BOGOTA (AP) — The government has announced its first big cocaine seizure of 1991, and a national police chief blamed drug traffickers and leftist guerrillas for a new wave of violence sweeping Colombia.

At least 32 policemen and soldiers have been killed since New Year's Eve.

"We are simultaneously suffering a terrorist wave from subversive groups and actions from drug traffickers who are seizing the moment to reap vengeance," Gen. Octavio Vargas, a national police director, said Thursday in an interview with the RCN Radio network.

In the past two days, police say, rebels have carried out at least 10 different attacks, killing around 27 policemen and soldiers, blowing up oil pipelines and destroying electrical power plants.

Police say the rebels were retaliating for the army's capture in early December of a guerrilla command post in the southern Colombian jungle.

Anti-narcotics police Wednesday seized about 2,500 pounds (1,130 kilograms) of pure cocaine on a ranch in an eastern Colombian jungle, national police spokesman Maj. Jorge Martin said.

The police destroyed a clandestine laboratory and seized cocaine-processing chemicals and weapons, Martin said. All the drug suspects escaped and there were no arrests, Martin said.

Also Wednesday, police in a northern rural zone destroyed a laboratory used to process heroine, Martin said.

Earlier, authorities blamed gunmen hired by Medellin drug traffickers for murdering five security officers Wednesday. The authorities said the murders may signal the return of the drug bosses' war against the government following a tenuous five-month truce.

Gunmen travelling in a moving car Wednesday shot dead four secret police agents in Medellin, police said. In a second attack, an anti-kidnapping army chief and his bodyguard were shot and wounded in the same city, home base to the world's most violent cocaine cartel.

The bodyguard, Henry Martinez, died later at a local hospital, an army report said.

Vargas said "Los Priscos," a Medellin gang hired by the city's cocaine cartel, was responsible for Wednesday's murders. He said it was not immediately clear if the killings were ordered by the cartel's leaders or by lower level traffickers avenging an anti-drug crackdown by police.

In July, the cartel stopped most of its bombings and assassinations. Before that, the traffickers admitted to having killed 250 Medellin policemen, or 10 per cent of the city's police force.

New terrorism by the cartel could be a major blow to President Cesar Gaviria's new anti-drug strategy, which critics have compared to the pre-World War II policy of appeasing Adolf Hitler.

Gaviria has offered to prohibit extraditions to the United States and reduce jail sentences of drug smugglers who surrender.

Five traffickers, including cartel leader Fabio Ochoa, have accepted the offer and turned themselves in.

Major vows to build on Thatcher era

LONDON (R) — Britain's new prime minister, John Major, vowed in an interview published Friday to press ahead with policies that marked the decade in power of his predecessor, Margaret Thatcher.

"I think what Mrs Thatcher achieved in the last 10 years was very remarkable and we are going to preserve it," Major said.

He told the Daily Mail newspaper: "I'll be doing things in my own way, in a different style, yes, but the objectives will be the same as we have had for

these past 10 years."

Major, who became prime minister in November after Thatcher lost a struggle for the leadership of the ruling Conservative Party, gave warning of tough times ahead before the economy started to come right.

The main battle would be against inflation, now an annual 9.7 per cent but forecast by the government to fall to around five per cent by the end of year.

"I hate it because it destroys peoples' lives. It makes a great country weak and inefficient and

it is destructive to everybody," Major said.

"There will be more pain before we beat it. I know that. But if people think that pain can be put off then they are wrong," he said. "Unemployment is going to rise and I do not know when precisely it will go down."

Major made it clear he planned to continue the government's policy of selling state-owned enterprises to the private sector.

"I have no fixed ending point to expanding the private sector," he said.

Hopes rise for resuming Sri Lankan peace talks

COLOMBO (R) — Sri Lanka ordered security forces Friday to suspend offensive operations against Tamil rebels for seven days, raising hopes for a resumption of peace talks.

Deputy Defence Minister Ranjan Wijeratne said the government gave the order despite several violations of a ceasefire declared by the rebels.

Asked by reporters if there was hope for resuming peace talks with the rebels, Wijeratne said: "Yes, we live in hope."

The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), who have fought for a separate homeland in the north and east of the Indian Ocean island for seven years, declared a unilateral ceasefire which came into effect Tuesday.

Wijeratne Friday listed seven violations of the ceasefire in which two soldiers were injured.

"These may be minor incidents. We are giving the benefit of the doubt about their intentions to the LTTE," Wijeratne told reporters.

He said the situation over the past three days since the ceasefire had come into effect was much better than in the previous three days.

Wijeratne said the government would assess the activities of the rebels on a day-to-day basis over the next seven days.

The government would consider extending the period of suspension if the rebels too observed the ceasefire, an official statement said Thursday.

"This could then lead to discussions for a political solution of the north-east question at which all political parties would be represented," it said.

The Tigers want to set up an independent homeland for the minority Tamils. They say the Sinhalese-dominated government is discriminating against Tamils in language, education and employment.

Wijeratne said opposition parties, which President Ranasinghe Premadasa consulted before ordering the suspension, favoured resuming peace talks with the rebels.

Bielecki approved as new Polish premier

WARSAW (AP) — Parliament overwhelmingly approved Jan Krzysztof Bielecki as prime minister Friday after he pledged to make the unpopular decisions necessary to recreate Poland as "a normal country."

The vote was 276 in favour, with 58 opposed and 52 abstaining.

President Lech Walesa, who proposed Bielecki a week ago, sat in the president's chair overlooking the parliament floor for the first time since being sworn in as Poland's only popularly elected head of state on Dec. 22.

After his confirmation, Bielecki, a deputy in the lower house of parliament, moved from his seat on the chamber floor to the bench reserved for the prime minister and his cabinet.

"My government will keep in mind the balance sheet of successes and failures of our predecessors," Bielecki told parliament before the vote. "That is why we want to be a government of continuation as well as breakthrough."

Bielecki, 39, was to present his programme to parliament Saturday and then nominate his cabinet.

Bielecki, an entrepreneur who started a business consulting firm employing Solidarity activists thrown out of work by the Communist regime, is head of the Liberal-Democratic Congress, a small political party devoted to developing private enterprise.

He replaces Tadeusz Mazowiecki, who became the East Bloc's first non-Communist government leader in August 1989 after Solidarity was relegalised and partially free elections were held.

Salvador rebels shoot down U.S. helicopter; 3 killed

SAN FRANCISCO, El Salvador (Agencies) — A peasant said he helped two victims limp away from the wreckage of a U.S. military helicopter downed by rebels, but that they received no medical attention and died.

The peasant, Silvio Mendez, said that when he first arrived at the site, a half-hour after it was struck by rebel gunfire and came down Wednesday, one crewman was dead and two were badly wounded. Debris at the scene indicated the copter crashed.

Both of the crewmen were bleeding from the neck, one more than the other, Mendez reported. One pleaded for "Agua," the Spanish word for water.

Mendez said he went away from the scene a short while later on the orders of rebels and did not see the crewmen die.

The UH-1H Huey transport helicopter crashed onto a hillside in eastern El Salvador, snapping off a treetop before apparently bouncing onto the scrubland 30 metres away and again 5 to 10 metres away.

The scene at the crash site conflicts with official U.S. accounts that the three crew landed the chopper safely after rebels hit it with small arms fire.

The chopper blades bore numerous bullet holes. Chief Defence Department spokesman Pete Williams said in Washington that all three victims had a gunshot wound in the head and two had no other apparent

wounds.

State Department Deputy spokesman Richard Boucher said circumstantial evidence indicated the three were shot to death by rebels after the aircraft, hit by gunfire, landed safely. He stopped short of saying rebels executed the three. He said a final determination will be made after investigation by a U.S. forensic team.

The team arrived in El Salvador Thursday and autopsies were scheduled for Friday, embassy spokeswoman Pamela Cory-Archer said.

Mendez, who lives about 200 yards from the crash site, said guerrillas came to get him to help them move the victims about 30 minutes after the chopper was shot down. The rebels then set fire to the aircraft.

One man was dead when he reached the site, Mendez told the Associated Press. One of the two still alive indicated he did not want to be moved, but Mendez moved him anyway on rebel orders, he said.

He said the two died about an hour later because the rebel "did not provide medical attention" or first aid of any kind. They died while he was away, going on rebel orders for water and a truck.

Mendez repeated essentially the same story later in radio interviews broadcast in the capital, San Salvador.

It was not clear how far from the site the injured men were

taken or where they died. Peasants in the area told reporters they heard gunfire, but some indicated it could have been ammunition exploding in the fire.

The leftist rebels' Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front said guerrillas did not know they were shooting down a U.S. helicopter. The rebels are fighting a U.S.-supported right-wing government.

"At the time it was a war craft that was overflying a war zone... and within this context it was shot down," a rebel statement said.

"One of the pilots was dead with a perforated skull and the other two were seriously wounded. They were given basic first aid and banded over to civilians to take them to hospital... but they did not survive their serious wounds," the statement said.

"There are dozens of civilian witnesses to this."

The statement contradicted a previous rebel version of the deaths, which said the three were found dead in the UH-1H helicopter after guerrilla forces downed it with rifle fire Wednesday.

The rebels repeated that their forces had downed what they took for a hostile aircraft, calling the area around Lolotique a war zone.

"This incident in no way counters our wish not to attack North American personnel, a decision we maintain as valid," the statement said.

New Washington mayor inaugurated

WASHINGTON (R) — Political newcomer Sharon Pratt Dixon was inaugurated Wednesday as mayor of the U.S. capital, becoming the first black woman to lead a large U.S. city.

Her inauguration formally ended the long Washington rule of Marion Barry, now facing prison for cocaine possession.

The 46-year-old divorcee was sworn into the \$90,705-a-year, four-year job before several thousands people in front of City Hall and within sight of the White House.

"What the people of Washington want most is an honest deal," she proclaimed in an inaugural speech harking back to her election campaign pledge.

She had promised to take a shovel to clean up a perceived mess of the Barry administration.

"We have lived through a decade of national excess... "Dixon said.

Elected in November by a landslide over former police chief Maurice Turner, a Republican, in her first try for public office, Democrat Dixon faces formidable problems similar to those of other states and cities — a record murder rate, a record budget deficit of up to \$300 million and the homeless.

"Help the homeless, build a shelter for dogs," shouted two bedraggled men with mongrel dogs on leashes on the fringe of

the well-dressed inaugural crowd. One said they spent Christmas night on the streets because shelters refuse to admit dogs.

Neither of the two top elected residents of the U.S. capital, President George Bush and Vice-President Dan Quayle were at the ceremony, attended mainly by regional and congressional dignitaries in this federal enclave.

Dixon, a former utility company executive and national Democratic Party official, is only the third elected mayor since 1974, when Congress granted limited home rule to Washington, D.C.

Gelb also has been embroiled in a feud with VOA Director Richard Carlson, another presidential appointee.

Gelb's critics claim he failed to consult with the White House and the congressional committees that oversee his agency on the restructuring.

Gelb's move comes as President George Bush prepares to appoint a panel to make recommendations on streamlining the administration's broadcast operations to fit the changing needs of the post-cold war era.

The panel will study whether VOA can be consolidated with Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty, which broadcast to Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union — and with Radio and TV Marti, which beam programmes to Cuba.

VOA employees accuse USIA of interference

WASHINGTON (AP) — Voice of America employees are accusing "a motley assortment of would-be propagandists" of interfering with the operations of the U.S. government's international radio service.

The employees are circulating a petition asking Congress to pass a law muzzling their parent organisation, the U.S. Information Agency (USIA).

USIA officials "continue to view VOA as nothing more than a periodically annoying in-house speaker for politically convenient messages," said the petition addressed to Rep. Mervyn Dymally, chairman of the House of Representatives Subcommittee on Communications.

VOA "must be given the autonomy and authority to man-

age itself as a news organisation run by journalists, not a motley assortment of would-be propagandists," the petition said.

VOA for decades has battled for such autonomy in order to maintain its worldwide reputation as a reliable and credible news service. In the 1980s, it gained some independence and control over its personnel and budget functions.

But two weeks ago, USIA Director Bruce Gelb announced he was taking back VOA's budget authority and its personnel and public affairs operations in order to save money and eliminate duplications.

Gelb, a presidential appointee, has angered VOA employees with several unpopular decisions, including one to eliminate six of the VOA's foreign-

language broadcasts. Gelb hacked off that decision under strong public pressure.

"In recent months we have noted with alarm the degree to which USIA and its director, Bruce Gelb, have sought to control the Voice of America, down to the content and tone of what goes on the air," the petitioners said.

It was not immediately known how many of VOA's estimated 2,500 employees signed the petition, but all of those interviewed said they supported its message.

"You can rest assured this reflects popular sentiment," said Allan Baker, who heads Friends of the Voice of America, a group of former VOA officials formed last year to help fend off budget cuts.

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COLUMBIA

U.S. to lift ban on immigrants with AIDS

NEW YORK (R) — U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services Louis Sullivan has taken the deadly virus AIDS off a list of sicknesses which can bar immigrants from the United States, the New York Times said Friday. Other diseases which are not passed casually, such as syphilis, gonorrhoea and leprosy, have also been taken off the list on the grounds they do not represent a threat to travellers, the newspaper said. The New York Times quoted U.S. officials as saying the new list, which will include only infectious tuberculosis, would soon be approved by the Immigration and Naturalisation Service and the U.S. State Department. The paper said the new policy would take effect from June 1, until then those carrying the AIDS (acquired immune deficiency syndrome) virus will be barred from entering the country unless they declare they are infected and receive an official waiver. The ban had become a point of controversy and was denounced last June at the sixth international conference on AIDS in San Francisco as ineffective and an intrusion into the lives of those carrying the virus.

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